CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES OF WOMEN ACADEMICS IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONTEXT: A CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY STUDY AND SUBSTANTIVE THEORY

By

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DECLARATION

I, Bongiwe Hobololo, student number 54232155, hereby declare that "**Career development trajectories of women academics in the South African Higher Education context: A constructivist grounded theory study and substantive theory**" is my original work, and that all the references cited have been acknowledged. I declare the ethical clearance to conduct the research was acquired from the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology, University of South Africa. Permission was obtained from the participants who participated in this research. Furthermore, I declare the study has been carried out in conformity with the Policy for Research Ethics of the University of South Africa (UNISA). Caution was exercised to ensure the research was conducted with the highest integrity, considering Unisa's Policy for Infringement and Plagiarism.

In addition, I declare that I have not formerly submitted this work, or parts thereof, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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SIGNATURE **DATE**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Anna Mamokete Hobololo, who taught me nothing is impossible to achieve in this world, if you set your mind to it. I also dedicate this work to Musawenkosi Khanyisa Hobololo and Siyamthanda Nyuyfoni Hobololo, my two sons. These two people make life worth a living.

ABSTRACT

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Statistics on the gender profile of academics in South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) reveal women academics are still concerted at the junior levels of the hierarchy with a small number of women at professorship. By the time of this report, in South Africa there were 4034 associate professors and professors. Of this 4034, 2174 (54%) were full professors. Of this 2174, only 534 (25%) were female professors.

The fundamental aim of this research was to tell the story behind these statistics by exploring, describing and giving explanation to the subjective experiences of women academics. The objectives of the research were broken down into: (1) to examine studies that explain discourses for women in academia, identify success and inhibiting factors to career development of women academics, identify gaps in knowledge and explain how this research seeks to address the gaps identified, (2) to investigate models and theories of career development, particularly in so far as they affect women, (3) to explore, describe and explain the career development trajectories of senior women academics in HEIs in SA, and (4) to develop a substantive career development theory that explains career trajectories of women in academia.

Utilizing data from 13 in-depth interviews with women professors and associate professors in a diversity of higher educational institutions in South Africa and different

fields of study, this research situates the senior women academics' experiences within the social constructivist context. I posed the question: "Tell me how your career journey as an academic started, up to the level where you are now". The questioning revolved around family background; social context; educational history; career development trajectory; professional experiences; and work-family integration. All interviews were audiotaped and then transcribed.

The analysis and interpretation of data was informed by the theoretical underpinnings of the study, which is located within feminism and social constructivism. The mean age of the participants was 53 years; years in service, 10 years and more. The findings revealed four themes associated with the career success of women academics: enabling and constraining factors; intrapsychic factors, behavioural patterns and differentiated career development trajectories. All these factors are inextricably linked and mutually affect the career success of women academics. The study ended up with a career development theory that came up with five phases and explained preoccupations at each phase. The phases are career exploration, career establishment, career maintenance, work life adjustment and disengagement. These phases are neither age related, nor cyclical at all times, but they are related to the stage in career development, and the needs of women academics

KEYWORDS: *women academics, career development, career success, career trajectory, South African higher education institutions, constructivist grounded theory, substantive theory, feminist, Afrocentric research*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASSAf:	Academy of Science of South Africa
AP:	Associate Professor
CHE:	Council of Higher Education
DHET:	Department of Higher Education and Training
FWC:	Family-work conflict
GT:	Grounded Theory
HBUs:	Historically Black Universities
HDIs:	Historically Disadvantaged institutions
HE:	Higher Education
HEIs:	Higher Educational institutions
HEMIS:	Higher Education Management Information System
HERS-SA:	Higher Education Resource Services – South Africa
HESA:	Higher Education in South Africa
HWU's:	Historically White Universities
HSRC:	Human Sciences Research Council
IO:	Industrial and Organisational
IOP:	Industrial and Organisational Psychology
LTCC:	Learning theory of career counseling
n.d.:	No Date
NDP:	National Development Plan
NPC:	National Planning Commission
NRF:	National Research Foundation
PhD:	Doctor of Philosophy
SA:	South Africa
SATN:	South African Technology Network
SLTCD:	Social learning theory of career development
UoTs:	Universities of Technology
UK:	United Kingdom of Britain
USA:	United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE
SCIENTIFIC CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In the context where women academics continue to enter and advance in higher education (HE), notwithstanding their under-representation in senior academic positions, this study sought to explore the career development experiences of successful women academics, to gain an in-depth understanding of their career development trajectories and the factors that have contributed to their success. From this exploration and description, the qualitative study aimed to generate a substantive career development theory specific to women academics in HE, which explains the career development experiences of successful women academics in South Africa.

In this chapter, I give the reader the background to and motivation for the research, by reflecting on several pertinent issues relevant to women in South African higher education institutions (HEIs), as well as on my personal motivation and interest in conducting this research. In addition, I present the problem statement and formulate congruent research questions and objectives, followed by the general statement on the nature of the study, and my reflection on the use of self in my writing style. In conclusion, I present the expected contribution of this research, followed by the summary of this chapter, which precedes a framework of the ensuing chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH

The shortage of women in senior academic positions remains a subject of interest three decades after Aisenberg and Harrington (1988) wrote about the experiences that women academics face in accessing what they called the ‘sacred grove’ (academia) in the United States. It is a subject that has attracted global attention because of the challenges that continue to face women academics − challenges that can be described as multifaceted and laden with myths, generalisations and mixed emotions (Barakat, 2014). This paucity of women in the academic domain is a reality that has motivated many scholars (Baptist, 2017; Bostock, 2014; De la Rey, 2002; Gilligan, 1982; Harding, 1998; Morley, 2014; Petersen, 1999) to carry out studies to understand the linkages of

this paucity to feminist theories. Notwithstanding the progress that women have produced in the past two decades, regarding enrolling for and attaining postgraduate qualifications and pursuing academic careers, women academics are still lagging their male colleagues in South African HEIs, especially at senior levels (Council on Higher Education [CHE] Report, 2017/8). Research indicates that gender parity decreases as one rises in the academic ranks to the professoriate level (Subbaye & Vithal, 2016).

Studies on the career development of women in academia conducted in western countries (Raburu, 2015), such as Australia, United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and the United States of America (USA) (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Armenti, 2004; Bagilhole, 1993; Blackmore, 1999; Morley, 2000; White, 2004), all have a common theme: women are in the margin in senior academic ranks, compared to their male counterparts. Compiling exact comparisons across countries, however, remains a complex task because of differing circumstances in each country (Aiston & Jung, 2015). In South Africa, there were only 534 (25%) women professors at the time of this study, according to the CHE Report (2017/8). This signals an improvement since the study of De la Rey (1999), when there were only 13% women professors in South Africa.

This research is located within the HE context in South Africa. Change in HE has resulted in the new knowledge economy, which has impacted how HEIs function and how academic career success is measured. Knowledge has turned into a currency that surpasses that of land, labour and materials, and HEIs are expected to contribute to the national economy. The HEIs' contribution to the knowledge economy depends on the quality of the academic talent that it attracts and retains. Women make up an essential component of the academic talent in HEIs. In this section, I provide a motivation for conducting this research. The rationale is cognisant of the historical background of HE in South Africa, capacity challenges then continuing gender inequalities, success criteria in the South African academic context, as well as evidence of women academics' successful movement up the seniority ranks. The section concludes with my personal account of my interest in the topic as a woman academic employed in a South African HEI.

1.2.1 The historical context of South African higher education

Historically, barriers have always existed for women to enter and advance in the field of HE. The evolution of HEIs in South Africa cannot be studied in isolation from the history of the country, as these two are inextricably linked. The history of HE in South Africa traced back to 1829, when the South African College was established in Cape Town. Many colleges later developed into universities (Human Sciences Research Council [HSRC], 1972). The enactment of the disreputable Extension of Universities Act 45 of 1959 enforced racial discrimination in university admissions and staffing, as a result of which several HEIs were established to privilege specific racial and language groups. This resulted in HEIs that were predominantly staffed and managed by white males (Barnes, Baijnath & Sattar, 2009).

Prior to 1994, the South African government supported 36 HEIs during the apartheid era. The apartheid rule resulted in these HEIs being characterised and molded by a set of legal rules that separated different components and actors within the system according to race and ethnic group, and institutional type, on the other hand (CHE, 2007/8). In addition, the 36 HEIs were a massive financial drain upon the new government after 1994, which is another reason for the introduction of mergers and incorporations in the HE sector in South Africa (Barnes et al., 2009). The legacy of racial inequalities in terms of quality and level of education, which were caused by differences in the quality of tertiary education received by blacks and whites due to apartheid, manifested itself in diverse ways, not least of which was the shortage of black and women academics (Barnes et al., 2009). Thus, from the onset, the HE system in South Africa was fraught with imbalances, as gender and racial inequality were entrenched, laying the basis for all the gaps that are witnessed currently. It is, however, not the intention of this study to dwell on racial inequalities, although the findings reveal some of the differences between races amongst the selected women academics who were participants in this research, which will be given attention in chapter six of this thesis. A key challenge for HEIs in South Africa is therefore the transformation of gender and racial staff composition profiles, senior academic positions and the research arena, in particular. Other challenges include attracting and retaining blacks and women in academia, and transforming HEI cultures, which may come across as alienating by black and women academics (Obers, 2014).

Since the 1994 democratic elections, the South African government has been involved in various interventions, such as the National Plan for Higher Education [NPHE], the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP), the Future Professors program, Employment Equity Act, and the Higher Education Act, among others, to redress these past imbalances and reposition the country for the future. As already outlined, the major challenges for HEIs were to address past racial and gender imbalances and change the HE system to meet national and global priorities, as well as respond to new challenges and opportunities (Higher Education White Paper, 1997). In 2002, Prof. Kader Asmal, the then Minister of HE, pronounced that a selected number of the 36 HEIs would be merged, to mitigate the racial and gender inequities of HE and the fiscal strain that these HEIs had inflicted on the HE system for a long period. In March 2001, Prof Asmal released a NPHE, according to which the number of public HEIs were shrunk from 36 to 23 through the mechanism of mergers (Ministry of Education, 2001). Eleven (11) institutions would be traditional universities, six (6) would be universities of technology (former Technikons), and six (6) would be comprehensive universities (which offer both university and technikon-type programmes). The greatest benefit for these mergers, according to Wyngaard and Kapp (2004), was the amalgamation of the disjointed HE system inherited from the previous regime, and the necessity to wipe out the reflective inequalities and distortions of the HE system. In South Africa, there are currently 25 public universities because of these mergers and incorporations, including the two new universities were established after the mergers. However, despite all these interventions, capacity challenges and gender inequities still exist in the HE system, which will be discussed in the following section.

1.2.2 Current capacity challenges and continued gender inequality in HE

In South Africa, registration for PhDs more than increased by two during 2009-2016 (104.3% increase or 10 981 from the past ten years). Growths were also recorded for Master's degrees (31.0% or 13 567) (CHE Report, 2017/8) in this period. This is a remarkable increase in postgraduate enrolments and graduations, albeit that it has not corresponded with an increase in the number of women academics. An upward trend was also noted in the graduation rates in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), Business and Management and Humanities fields in the period 2009-2016. Graduation rates from Education programmes were effectively unwavering

during the period 2009-2015, however improved significantly in 2016 (CHE Report, 2017/8; DHET Report, 2017/8).

In 2012, only 34% of academics in South Africa had PhDs, a requirement for assuming high-quality research roles and supervising PhD and master students (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2012), however, this percentage has progressed since 2012. Specifically, a growing trend is observed in graduates for all the qualifications in the period 2009-2016, with the highest increases documented for PhDs (102.7% or 1 417). However, only 42% of PhD graduates in 2012 were women.
In 2019, 24% of women professors and associate professors, according to the latest audited DHET Report (2017/8). The DHET Report (2017/8) and CHE Report (2017/8) revealed that South Africa had 39 more professors and associate professors in 2013 than in 2012, when the total number was 4073. Of this number, 2174 (54%) were full professors, and only 534 (25%) of the full professors were women.

These trends reinforce the fact that there have been significant improvements in gender parity in the professoriate, and those women professors are gaining ground, though still at a slower pace than their male counterparts. However, the increase in the number of women professors in HEIs has not been equally complemented by their representation in senior management positions, especially leadership of academic divisions, which is an area that may need further investigation.

After 1994, South African universities faced the challenge of producing and preserving the next cohort of academics (Badat, 2010; Higher Education in South Africa [HESA], 2011). Given the retirement age of 65 years, in the next decade (2020-2030), it was estimated that over 4 000 or 27% of academics will retire, including 50% of the most highly qualified professors and associate professors (NPC, 2012). Therefore, the proposed national intervention for transforming HE in South Africa was motivated by the lack of academics and postgraduates to replace the retiring academics in the next decade (2020-2030) (NPC, 2012).

Furthermore, according to the DHET Report (2017/8), the increase in student enrolments over the past 20 years had not been accompanied by an equivalent expansion in academics. The whole objective of expanding HE enrolments through removing barriers to access and establishing new universities not only meant that enrolment figures and graduation rates in postgraduate studies were expected to increase – it was also expected that a larger academic workforce that would commensurate the increased demand for HE would emerge from the pool of graduates, which is still a challenge. Moreover, this situation leaves another vacuum with regard to the supervision of postgraduate students, which is another area with serious capacity challenges. Meanwhile, South Africa, as a competitor in the new global knowledge economy, is required to increase not only the number of PhDs and Masters' graduates, but the quality of PhDs is expected to improve dramatically (Academy of Science of South Africa [ASSAf], 2016).

In summary, the 2017/8 CHE and DHET Reports reported increases in the number of Masters and PhD graduates, although the number is still low compared to South Africa's capacity challenges. On the other hand, since HEIs in South Africa are struggling to revitalise the research function (Cloete, Maasen & Bailey, 2015) in the new global knowledge economy, the challenge is even greater for historically black universities (HBUs) and UoTs in South Africa. These general capacity shortages, accompanied by continued gender inequities up to senior levels, translate into women academics having little or no voice in the decision-making structures of HEIs. Attention must be thus be focused on attracting and retaining women and black postgraduates to academia, and developing those already in the system, to bridge the gender imbalances on the HE system. The 2017/8 CHE and DHET Reports noted that while the percentages of women and black graduates have increased significantly, they remain down compared to male and white graduates. In addition, women graduates are disproportionately spread among the various disciplines and continue to be concentrated in the humanities and social science fields (DHET Report, 2017/8). Obers (2014) acknowledged that whereas mentoring could help overcome gender inequalities, the need for programmes that provide the necessary support and training for the new generation of academics is still great. To facilitate transformation in South African HEIs, Ramohai (2019) emphasizes the continued need to prioritise especially black women in the transformation agenda and argues for eliciting the voice of these

women. The focus of this research was, however, not on underrepresentation of blacks, but rather women in senior positions in academia, which can be better understood in the context of the success criteria relevant to the progression of the academic career, which is deliberated in the next section.

1.2.3 Success criteria in the academic career

It is a well-known fact that gaining access to academia and making a success out of an academic career is an elaborate and demanding process (Geber, 2009), starting from career preparation through to PhD studies and beyond, where the journey can be fraught with challenges. Developing as an academic is also regarded as “a lifelong process, in which moving from a novice to an expert is an essential rite of passage into academic practice” (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p.35).

Having a PhD and establishing a sound publication record in accredited journals is imperative for succeeding in academia as a credible researcher (Geber, 2009). Where teaching was once a fundamental function of university academics, research and publishing have now become far more pertinent to the HEI milieu. Zulu (2013) and Cloete et al. (2015) echoed that publication in recognised scholarly journals is the primary indicator of academic worth, paving the way to rewards such as promotions, tenure and research funding. Zulu (2013) further stated that scholarly publishing, in all its manifestations, remains both the bedrock and the currency of academic life. Aiston and Jung (2015) supported this by stating that indicators of research productivity are: “the number of publications; citation counts; doctoral students and competitive research funding” (p. 206), although there may be differences between academic disciplines in terms of the importance attached to these indicators.

A study by Frick, Albertyn, Brodin, McKenna and Claesson (2016) on the experiences of early career academics at eight New Zealand universities found that having a PhD was positively associated with the academic success of early career academics. Though this finding is not surprising, Frick et al. (2016) further discovered that the more holistic the PhD experience (including lecturing experience and serving on university committees during candidacy), the more successful early career academics were in terms of increased research output and job satisfaction. Similarly, Sinclair, Cuthbert

and Barnacle (2014) correspondingly reported that in their sample of successful researchers, PhD prepared them for an academic career. Both studies however, agreed that some aspects essential for a successful academic career were not developed through their PhD studies, and that there is academic development that continues after the PhD candidature.

Firstly, it needs to be considered that it takes about 10-12 years to obtain a PhD from the time one embarks upon undergraduate studies, and then another 5-10 years from PhD to professorate. As such, the pool of South African academics available for appointment to professorship in 2020 can be viewed as a proportion of the pool of PhD graduates in 2010. Granted the inequalities and shortages in the South African HE system already discussed in section 1.2.2, this is a very small pool. The problem is further exacerbated by that from the small pool of PhD graduates, not all will pick academic careers over offers from the government and corporate sectors, which are desperate to recruit highly skilled professionals. In a study conducted in the UK by Rice (2012), several women, during their PhD candidature, reported that they would not pursue a career in academia for the following reasons: “the characteristics of academic careers are unappealing, the impediments they will encounter are disproportionate, and lastly, the sacrifices they will have to make are great”.

Nevertheless, not even academics with PhDs can be accomplished supervisors of PhD students without further interventions (NPC, 2012). Academics need to be enabled, through structured development programmes, mentoring and co-supervising alongside experienced supervisors. Such effective supervision will undoubtedly contribute to an improvement in the current below-benchmark postgraduate throughput and graduation rates (NPC, 2012). However, the challenges of becoming a successful woman academic are exarcebated by demands such as unevenly distributed workloads and institutional politics (Portnoi, 2015), coupled with institutional culture barriers and policy constraints that may not support the upward movement of women (McNeely & Vlaicu, 2010).

Secondly, and most importantly, academic success is determined by research outputs, which can be measured through peer reviews, calculation of outputs, and citation indices (Cloete et al., 2015; Obers, 2014; Zulu, 2013). This has resulted in increased

pressure on academics in HEIs to conduct research and publish, whilst maintaining their teaching workload. From the literature that was reviewed, one theme that emerges strongly is that a correlation exists between career advancement as an academic and a strong publication record. Research publication is the fundamental criterion for academic success, as it is required for promotion to senior positions, with a professorship being the highest level in an academic career (Boyd & Smith, 2016; Von Solms & Von Solms, 2016). The pressure to publish is compounded by the fact that HBUs, like UoTs in South Africa, are now viewed equally to traditional research universities. This implies that the same yardsticks and pressures apply in terms of national research benchmarks. Again, there is documented evidence that women's research productivity is less than that of their male counterparts worldwide Women researchers experience further difficulties when they are coming from HEIs where no established publishing culture exists (Butler– Adam, 2015; Garnett & Mohamed, 2012; Obers, 2015). According to the National Research Foundation [NRF] Report 2017/8), the research output of males in South Africa is higher than that of women. Women publish only between 14% and 17% of journal articles and only 1 in 3 NRF-rated researchers are women. However, through initiatives such as the South Africa PhD Project, which is NRF's initiative, there have been improvements in the participation rates and excellence of women in research. However, the imbalance of women academics' publishing is still evident. Having gained a clear understanding of what success in academia means in the context of HEIs in South Africa, I will now look at the evidence of successful women academics in South African HEIs.

1.2.4 Women in the South African HE context: evidence of success

Although evidence of gender inequities has been presented to show how South African HEIs are still grappling with shortages of women academics in senior positions, Ramohai (2019) presents a fresh gendered perspective on successful transformation in HEIs. To follow her lead in cultivating a positive attitude of co-accountability for gender transformation, it seems useful to study successful women in academia, and supports the purpose of this study as linked to success stories of senior women academics in South Africa. There are success stories of women academics who have ascended to senior positions in academia that are worth celebrating. As evident from the discussion so far, academic success is connected to seniority, professorship and

publication record. Research and publication have been cited as the important criteria for academic career advancement (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Zulu, 2013), and therefore considerable weight is given to these criteria in the promotion of academics to senior positions. As already noted, research performance is a conduit to academic seniority and an indicator for promotion (Morley, 2014).

For this study, a successful woman academic is thus regarded as a woman professor or associate professor, who is highly regarded for her research output and academic contribution or who performs a managerial or leadership role. It is worth noting that in HE, there is a managerial stream into which academics and non-academics can be promoted, for instance registrars and senior administrators, which requires different competencies for promotion into senior managerial positions.

From reading the previous HEMIS reports, evidently women professors numbers continue to increase, though gradually, with women academics progressing to higher levels in academia, even as high as the level of vice-chancellor, as depicted in Table 1.1 below. Currently, in South African HEIs, four out of 25 university vice-chancellors (VC's) are women, which is only 16 % of the total number of VCs in South African HEIs. Prof De la Rey was the fifth woman VC until recently, when she moved to New Zealand's University of Canterbury in February 2019. This resulted in the statistics decreasing, as a male VC replaced her, which is a deep concern if one looks at the figures. These statistics show a significant improvement, although they highlight the need for further improvements in the representation of women in senior academic positions. De la Rey (2018) stated that while participation rates of women have increased significantly at all education levels, the number of women at the helm of universities continues to lag (University World News, 27 July 2018). This imbalance occurs despite significant increases in women's input in formal employment and higher education. De la Rey (2018) went on to say while gender equity policies are necessary, they are not enough to ensure gender parity. Part of the issue, according to De la Rey (2018) is that leadership characteristics are associated with masculinity, often to the detriment of women candidates.

Table 1.1: *Vice chancellors in South African HEIs (Universities South Africa, 2019)* ***www.usaf.ac.za****. Formerly known as Higher Education in South Africa (HESA)*

University	Vice-Chancellor
Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science	Prof Rob Midgley
Vaal University of Technology	Prof Zide
University of Zululand	Prof Xoliswa Mtose
University of Venda	Dr Ndanduleni Bernard Nthambeleni
University of the Witwatersrand	Prof Adam Habib
University of the Western Cape	Prof Tyrone Pretorius
University of the Free State	Prof Francis Petersen
University of Stellenbosch	Prof Wim de Villiers
University of South Africa	Prof Mandla Makhanya
University of Pretoria	Professor Tawana Kupe
University of Mpumalanga	Prof Thoko Mayekiso
University of Limpopo	Prof Mahlo Mokgalong
University of KwaZulu-Natal	Prof Nana Poku (Acting)
University of Johannesburg	Prof Tshilidzi Marwala
University of Fort Hare	Prof Sakhele Buhlungu
University of Cape Town	Prof Mamokgethi Phakeng
Tshwane University of Technology	Prof Lourens van Staden
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University	Prof Christopher De Beer
Rhodes University	Dr Sizwe Mabizela
Nelson Mandela University	Prof Sibongile Muthwa
Mangosuthu University of Technology	Dr Enoch Duma Malaza
Durban University of Technology	Professor Thandwa Mthembu
Central University of Technology	Prof Henk de Jager
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	Dr Chris Nhlapho

Although South African HEIs have celebrated success stories of women in academia, the factors contributing to this success are not yet clear. Exploring the success criteria and enabling environments associated with successful women academics is a critical step towards the development of a career development theory, the eventual objective of this research. Having looked at the success criteria and the evidence of successful women in South African HEIs, I will now make my personal reflections on what motivated me to conduct this research.

1.2.5 Personal reflections as a motivation for conducting this research

This section explains how I developed interest in this topic, and the reasons for the questions posited in this research report. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) stated that in some instances, researchers might have had personal experiences associated to the phenomenon studied; hence, they may want an enhanced understanding of the experiences of others in this regard. My personal background and professional experiences had a vital role in the choice of this topic. I have personally experienced some of the professional, societal and personal barriers to career development, and this stimulated my interest in conducting research on this phenomenon.

My journey as a woman academic started upon graduating for an Honours degree in 1995. Subsequently, the university where I studied appointed me as a junior lecturer in 1996, which was my first job. During a career that spanned almost twenty years, I worked as an academic at different South African HEIs, particularly HBUs and moved up the ranks to the level of senior lecturer. Just when I was contemplating pursuing a PhD, I fell pregnant with my second child, and the work-family balance issue became a reality for me. During my tenure at these HEIs, I obtained a Master's degree, became a mother of two sons, now 20 and 9 respectively, and even became the Head of Department. In the HEI where I was employed, I received the necessary support, as both an individual and an employee, and got promotion opportunities, but I wanted more. I have been actively involved in politics in HE, especially issues related to fighting gender inequities. For seven consecutive years, I occupied the position of president of a local branch for a staff union, called the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). During this period and before union leadership, I had the privilege of attending union workshops and meetings at both regional and national levels. I gained exposure to

serious gender and racial inequities in the leadership of HEIs, which was also reflected in the leadership of union structures.

I took a decision to change my focus from politics to building my academic career. I decided to put more effort into doing research, as my career path was not growing as fast as I would have liked it to, especially in terms of attaining my PhD and publishing. Furthermore, I discovered that the environment within which I found myself did not contribute much towards enabling me to realise my full potential or to fulfil my self-determined goals, hence the move to Gauteng to pursue my PhD dream. Having observed successful women in academia, both young and old, who were an inspiration to me, I aspired to do an in-depth study to explore and describe how they succeeded despite all their challenges. My experiences inevitably influenced not only the topic I chose to study, but also the methodological choices I made, as reflected in the constructivist and feminist paradigms adopted in this study (chapter two). It is also important that my background is made transparent in this study, as my interpretations and the co-constructed findings have inevitably been influenced by my views and understanding. As such, the findings in this study represent an approach towards and understanding of the study phenomenon, which may be different to those of other studies, while still contributing towards building knowledge in the field. This research project, in many ways, also changed me and enabled me to take a closer look at my own career path and reflect on my journey as an academic, and these reflections are discussed thoroughly in chapter eight. My research journey enabled me to be more cognisant of my different identities: as a woman, a mother, a researcher and academic, and enlightened me about my own career development trajectory within the South African HE context.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem identified in this research is that: despite the increase of women graduating with postgraduate qualifications, the depiction of women in senior academic positions in HEIs in South Africa still does not match the demographics of women with postgraduate qualifications, even though women make up the majority of the population, and more women graduates are produced by universities annually (CHE Report, 2017/8; DHET Report, 2017/8). Since the aim was to contribute to the existing

body of knowledge by developing a substantive career development theory, it makes sense to explain what accounts for, or what will result in, an academic promotion, as explained in section 1.2.3 above.

In trying to explain why the research output of women remains less than that of their male counterparts, researchers have uncovered several challenges that appear to hamper research productivity (Zulu, 2013). There are many discourses that explain women's research productivity (Zulu, 2013) that may explicate the gender disparity in academia. From previous research, these discourses are family expectations and burdens, less time for research, and different work-life priorities (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Mouton, 2007; Prozesky, 2006). Further to these, gender stereotyping and discrimination, a lack of networking and mentorship opportunities, sexual harassment, salary inequities, a lack of training and career advancement, and an inadequate work-life balance (Barrett & Barret, 2011; Chinyamurindi, 2016; Fouad & Fitzpatrick, 2011) are other barriers cited. Furthermore, questions about women's ability, a lack of self-efficacy and self-confidence, support barriers, plus interest congruence, which may be a result of the societal influences exerted by parents, teachers at school, lecturers at university, and industry advisors are also cited as barriers (Mamaril & Royal, 2008). Barriers should not only be viewed as challenges only, they can also serve as a source of strength and resilience to women academics (Ramohai, 2019).

Though women, in some instances, are afforded similar opportunities to men for career development, the small number of women producing research outputs can be attributed to several disabling factors in balancing career and family life (Managa, 2013). Geber (2009), Obers (2014) and Prozesky (2008) reported that women's priorities and choices may work against them, as women are predominantly regarded as primary care-givers, something which repeatedly interrupts their career development trajectories owing to childbearing and child-rearing, which might adversely affect their accumulation of intellectual capital. Gender stereotyping has therefore been mentioned as influential in defining roles for women, as it positions them as caretakers, according to Schein (2007). This is in line with Butler's (2004) performativity theory, which claims that women adapt to societal standards that frame them as caregivers. Significant investigations have been conducted on the barriers that women face in their career advancement (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Ismail, Wahat &

Abdul, 2005; Subbaye & Vithal, 2016), which will be discussed in chapter four, yet very few studies focus on the success stories of women. Since there is a signal of women having successfully advanced into senior academia, it is important to explore their success, to benefit other women in this context, which this research intended to achieve.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The answers to the research problem highlighted in the previous section were obtained by getting responses to the following questions:

- What are the known barriers to the career progression of women academics, and what are the known strategies to overcome the identified barriers?
- What are the best-known career development models and theories that explain the career development of women?
- What are the career experiences and trajectories of senior women academics who have succeeded in academia?
- How can the successful career trajectory of a woman in academia be described?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To contribute to the knowledge of factors affecting the career success of senior academic women, this study sought to explore and describe career development trajectories of selected senior women academics at HEIs in South Africa. Through exploring the career narratives and lived experiences of these senior women academics, the general purpose of the study was to construct a career development theory that explains career development trajectories of successful women academics within the South African context.

Against the backdrop of the stated general aim, the following specific theoretical and empirical aims were identified. The theoretical aims of this research were addressed by means of the literature review, which sought to:

- investigate barriers and successes related to women's career advancement, and the strategies to overcome these barriers, including their specific relevance to women academia; and
- analyse models and theories of career development, particularly in relation to women academics' career development.

Below are the empirical aims of this research, which were achieved by conducting interviews with selected women academics. The research aimed to:

- explore and describe the career experiences and trajectories of senior women academics in South African HEIs; and
- develop a substantive career development theory that explains the career trajectories of senior women academics at different stages of their careers.

1.6 GENERAL NATURE OF THE STUDY

The central aim of this qualitative research was to tell the story behind the evidence of successful women academics in South African HEIs, by exploring, describing and explaining their subjective experiences, to develop a substantive theory that explains the career development trajectories of women academics. To achieve the above stated aims of the study, the research focused on: (1) exploring barriers to the career development of women and strategies to overcome such barriers; (2) examining studies that explain discourses for women in academia, identify success and inhibiting factors related to the career development of women academics, identify gaps in knowledge and explain how this research seeks to address the gaps identified; (3) investigating models and theories of career development, particularly in so far as they affect women; (4) exploring and describing the career development trajectories of senior women academics in HEIs in South Africa, and (5) develop a career development theory that explains the career trajectories of women in academia.
Data were obtained through interviewing thirteen (13) women professors and associate professors from a diversity of universities, academic disciplines, race groups and ages. Qualitative research appears to be invaluable for the exploration of the subjective experiences of participants. This qualitative study was conducted within a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methodological framework, located within feminist and

constructivist paradigms. The basic assumption of CGT is to give voice to the participants. The process of analysis and interpretation was thus informed by the theoretical underpinnings located within feminism and the epistemological notion of social constructivism. Charmaz' (2008) CGT approach was adopted during data analysis. CGT recognizes the researcher's part in the co-creation of knowledge. Thus, as the primary research instrument, I was absolutely engaged in the reiterative activities of data collection and analysis as explained in chapter three of this thesis. I therefore applied a self-reflective, first-person style of writing in the text, to acknowledge myself in the construction of this theory.

1.7 THE USE OF SELF-REFLECTION AND WRITING STYLE OF THE THESIS

Writing in the first person is traditionally not acceptable, but it is gaining ground in qualitative studies. In a CGT framework, the product of the analysis is constructed through the collaborative effort of the researcher and respondents. In addition, the suppositions of constructivism are likely to be subjective, and the created knowledge is apprehended as dependent on the interface between the researcher and participants (Mong Ha, 2011). I therefore write in a self-reflective mode to acknowledge my input to the data collection and analysis processes, in addition the interpretation of the findings for the research.

Furthermore, qualitative researchers are known to be more self-disclosing about their writings than quantitative researchers. What is written and how qualitative research is written are reflections of researchers' own interpretations, based on the cultural, social, gender, class and personal politics that they bring to the research process (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, as a researcher, I cannot claim to be neutral. As Creswell (2013) and Lambert, Jomeen and McSherry (2010) agree, all writing is "positioned" within a stance. The way in which qualitative researchers need to position themselves in their writing is through reflexivity (Norlyk & Harder, 2010; Tufford & Newman, 2012), whereby researchers acknowledge their biases, values and experiences from the beginning. I positioned myself not as a stranger observing, but as a participant-observer, because the research topic is so close to my own experiences and career needs. However, I looked at things as if for the first time. Through reflexivity, I constantly reflected on how my attraction in the topic and my familiarities with the HE

context might impact on my research decisions and interpretations of the findings. I therefore kept a reflexive journal, which will be discussed in chapter three of this report, where I recorded my emotional and cognitive observations, as well as observations of the participants in this regard. Thus, a reflexive process underpinned every stage of this qualitative study, to safeguard my biases, presuppositions, and interpretations, with the aim of ensuring the rigor of the research.

1.8 EXPECTED CONTRIBUTION OF THIS STUDY

The value of studying the experiences of women in academia is gaining increasing importance, judging by the number of women showing interest in academia, and the rise of women in academic leadership. Most studies on career development tend to study women in other contexts, with limited research on women in academia in South Africa. In addition, whilst there are statistics available on women academics in South Africa, there is a scantiness of inquiries that explain the story behind the statistics. South African HEIs have challenges of their own that may be unique in nature, given the differences in the historical, social and economic contexts of the country. Therefore, what accounts for the career development trajectories of women academics in South Africa may be different to what has been studied in other work contexts. The substantive theory generated through this research will be the theoretical contribution to the existing body of knowledge within the field of industrial and organisational psychology, and the subfield of career psychology.

Moreover, as academia is different from any other sector of the economy, in terms of defining success, the results of this research will contribute towards defining what academic success in HEIs in South Africa means for women. It is therefore imperative that those who have succeeded on this path identify the qualities needed to succeed in academia. As already outlined, academic success is determined by the ability to establish a reputable academic profile through attaining a doctorate and producing accredited journal publications, as well as supervising research, to qualify as a senior academic, associate professor, and full professor. Therefore, for one to succeed in this economy, one should invest a lot of time in doing research and publishing one's work. The HE context in South Africa is diverse in terms of organisational cultures, which means that at a more practical level, women from the UoTs and comprehensive

universities, who have been focusing on teaching and learning for a long time, while forfeiting research, can learn from women from traditional universities, where the culture of research is already embedded.

Strategically, the results are expected to provide a platform for engagement for policy makers within HEIs. The policy makers should therefore devise ways in which they can build their organisational culture and policies around the newly generated knowledge and understanding, which is a practical application of the research in HEIs. Policy makers are expected to be more conversant and sensitive than before regarding the issues confronting women academics whilst attempting to achieve their professional goals, and what kinds of support women academics need from the organisation.

Furthermore, the results can assist young and aspiring women to apprehend the prominence of planning their academic career, and those in midlife stages will learn that despite personal, cultural and organisational barriers, they can still rise to the upper echelons within the academia by learning from the experiences of senior academics. Even those women who have late starts can determine their place in academia by learning from other women who have succeeded.

Methodologically, this research will contribute to grounded theory research, feminist research and social constructivist research. The heterogeneity of academic women's experiences based on their geographical locations, cultural backgrounds, demographic profiles, societal norms, skill levels and other factors responsible for differences in women's behaviour makes it impossible to have a single theory that give explanation to the career development journeys of women academics in South African HEIs. Therefore, there is a need to expand voices that speak on the career development of women in academia, which this research aimed to achieve.

In summary, this research made an original and creative contribution to knowledge by developing a career development theory that describes the career trajectories of women academics in South Africa, thereby expanding the extant literature in the field of career psychology. This theory also made a methodological contribution to social constructivist career research and grounded theory methodology. Again, as previously indicated, this research explored and described the career development phenomenon

within South African HEIs from the feminist point of view. This is fundamental to feminist research, because of the complexity of women's issues.

1.9 CHAPTER LAYOUT

Chapter One: Scientific orientation of the research

This chapter gave the background to the research, provided the context within which this study is situated, presented the research problem, research objectives, personal motivation to conduct research on this phenomenon, and the expected contribution of this research. Furthermore, I presented my writing style and a summary of the research study.

Chapter Two: Planning the research journey

This chapter positions the purpose of this research, and provides the disciplinary boundaries, followed by the research paradigms and philosophical assumptions underlying this study. Based on these knowledge fundamentals, an outline of the qualitative research design is presented. The chapter ends by explaining the research approach followed, namely the CGT, preceded by an argument on the versions of GT and how I found the GT approach that resonated with my research objectives.

Chapter Three: The natural account of the research journey

This chapter deals with the research methods and provides a natural account of the research process. It describes the set of procedures, techniques and instruments employed to gather and analyse the data. It also discusses the limitations of the study and the measures taken to ensure the rigor of the research.

Chapter Four: Women in academia: A local and international perspective

This chapter critically evaluates previous studies that focus on women in academia, both globally and locally. Barriers to women's career advancement in general, and specifically to women in academic professions, as well as the strategies to overcome such barriers, preceded by career development trajectories are discussed. The chapter further explains how this research sought to bridge the gaps that were identified from previous studies.

Chapter Five: Career development models and theories

This chapter provides an overview of the literature on the theories and models of career development that are applicable in this research. They are categorised as classical theories, contemporary theories and feminist theories. This chapter furthermore presents the gap between previous research and the proposed framework of gathering information about women in academia.

Chapter Six: Data presentation and discussion of results

This chapter presents and analyses the data collected in the study. Further results of the analysis are discussed in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter integrates the discussion of results with the extant literature on categories identified.

Chapter Seven: The substantive theory of career development

This chapter presents the substantive theory on career development, which encapsulates the main categories that emerged from the data. In this chapter, the substantive theory is developed and presented using the findings of the study. The theory comprises the environmental context, career development phases, tasks and behaviours at each phase, which are all essential elements of a career theory, and explains the interplay between these factors and integrates the discussions of the data and literature.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations

This chapter presents a critical summary of the study, as well as conclusions, limitations and recommendations for future research. It links the research objectives with the findings, identifies gaps, and makes recommendations.

1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, the focus of this chapter was on providing insight into the research problem. The peculiarity of the HEI sector and the demands it places on academics in terms of gaining entry to and succeeding in their career were discussed. Furthermore, the chapter celebrated the significant increase in the participation of women in higher

education, and their success as academics, as witnessed by women occupying senior academic positions. Finally, the intended outcome of this research was described in detail, namely, to develop a career development theory from the experiences of the selected senior women academics.

The context and nature of the study, and my personal motivation for this research were thoroughly explained, together with the expected contribution of this research. Lastly, the layout of ensuing chapters was presented.

CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH DESIGN: PLANNING MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter, the focus was on motivating the choice of my topic, problematising the research questions, and explaining how this research intended to answer the research questions. Once a problem statement was articulated, the following stage was to choose a proper research design (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Mouton, 2001; Terre Blanche, Kelly & Durrheim, 2006). Creswell (2013) and Mouton (2001) define a research design as a proposal or outline of in what manner one intends to conduct the research. It entails the whole process of the study, from conceptualising the problem, and formulating aims, to the paradigms, methodology and methods applied. In summary, for this research, I described a research design as:

> [a*] strategic plan for a research project setting out the broad outline and key features of the work to be undertaken, including the methods of data collection and analysis to be employed, and showing how the research strategy addresses the specific aims and objectives of the study, and whether the research issues are theoretical [i.e. basic or pure] or policy-directed [i.e. applied]* (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Firstly, the research design provides important clues about the phenomenon to be studied, as it deals with the structure of the study, and data collection methods used to achieve the objectives of the study (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill & Bristow, 2019; Yin, 2012). Secondly, it is demarcated by the disciplinary boundaries and meta-theoretical constructs that underlie the topic of the study. My research journey as summarised in Figure 2.1 below correspondingly included an understanding of the philosophical foundations that underpinned my thinking, as this was going to inform my research methodology and appropriate research methods. To develop an appropriate research design, I thus had to consider six important and interrelated issues: research purpose, disciplinary boundaries, my philosophical worldview (research philosophy and paradigm); inquiry strategy, and the research methodology and methods used to collect, analyse and interpret the data. Based on the model suggested by Creswell

(2008, p. 5), Figure 2.1 below presents the elements of my research design, which constitutes the summary of my research journey, as will be discussed in the sections to follow.

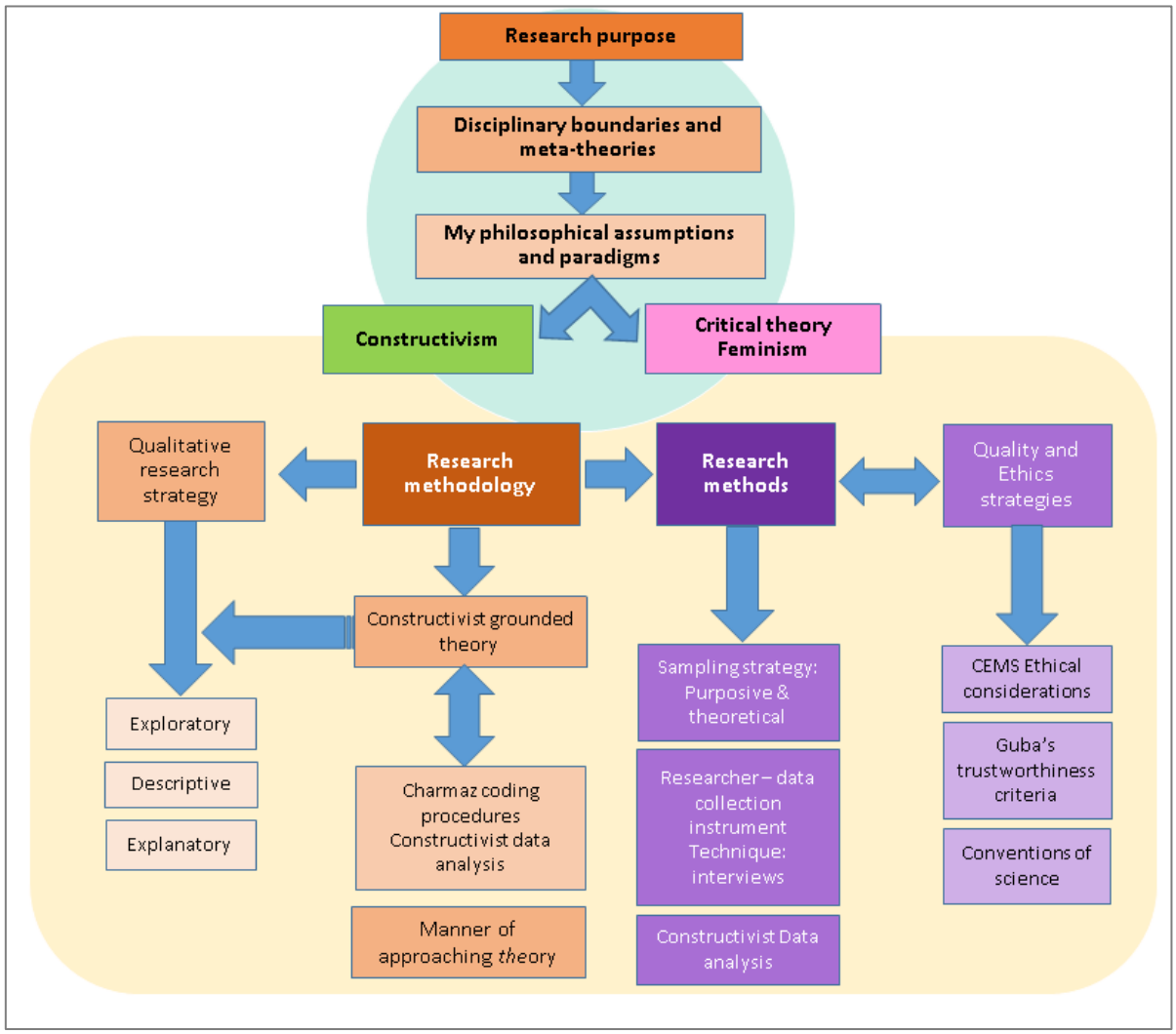

Figure 2.1: Summary of my research journey

2.2 THE OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As already outlined in section 2.1 above, research purpose constitutes the starting point in determining the research design. Research generally aims to be either explanatory, descriptive, and/ or explanatory (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). Considering the research aims formulated in section 1.5, the purpose of this study can be described as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory, as the intention was to explore and describe the career development trajectories of selected women professors, with the fundamental objective of developing a substantive career development theory that

explains the career development trajectories of women academics in the South African context. The study is exploratory in the sense that it seeks to gain a deeper understanding of participants' realities regarding their career development trajectories (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003). As such, a research design aimed at exploring lived experiences is needed, which is usually akin to a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research does not skim the surface but digs deep and produces what Geertz (1973) refers to as a thick description of the social world, and provides an understanding of the social phenomenon under investigation in its natural setting (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007).

According to Burns and Bush (2006), an exploratory research design is described as one in which information is gathered in an informal and unstructured manner and is appropriate when the researchers know only a little about the opportunity or issue. Consistent with Ritchie et al. (2014) who postulated that exploratory research is more appropriate when the researcher wants to gain new insights into and understanding of the experience of a particular phenomenon, I therefore thought that it was important for this phenomenon to be explored, as little was known about women academic career development trajectories in the HE in South Africa. Therefore, data was gathered in an informal and unstructured way, in accordance with Burns and Bush's (2006) description of an explorative research design.

Secondly, the research was descriptive, in the sense that it endeavoured to conceptualise career development, to expand on ways of looking at career development in HEIs in South Africa. Descriptive research provides a contextual focus, which assisted me to obtain rich, multidimensional insights into the phenomenon, by iteratively exploring various aspects of, and underlying forces behind, the particular phenomenon (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004), grounded on the responses provided by the participants. Descriptive research provides an accurate and valid representation of the factors that pertain to the research question, and is more structured than exploratory research (Terre Blanche, et al., 2006).

Lastly, the aim of the research was not merely to describe, but also to develop a substantive theory about the career trajectories of women in HE, thus explanatory. The term 'explanatory research' implies that the research in question is intended to explain,

rather than simply to describe, the phenomena being studied. Explanatory research has had a contested history in qualitative inquiry, and there are divergent views regarding the appropriateness of such goals in qualitative research (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010). The theory-building nature of qualitative inquiry, however, lends itself to explanatory research.

2.3 DISCIPLINARY BOUNDARIES

This section reports on the disciplinary boundaries of the study. The primary discipline and sub-disciplines are indicated, and the meta-theoretical constructs that informed the study are introduced.

2.3.1 Primary discipline

The primary discipline of this study was industrial and organisational psychology (IOP), as a significant contribution will be made to this field. According to Sdorow and Rickabaugh (2006), IOP applies various psychological principles, concepts and methods to study and influence human behaviour in the workplace. The overall goal of IO psychologists is to maintain and improve organisational functioning, by understanding the interaction between humans and their work environment from a psychological perspective. Spector (2012) defines IOP as the scientific study of human behaviour and psychological conditions in the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services, to use this knowledge to minimise problems. Cascio and Aguinis (2018) describes the tasks of IOP as:

> *running human resource departments, working to improve staff morale and attitudes in order to increase job performance, satisfaction and productivity, examining organisational structures and procedures, and making recommendations for improvements.*

The sub-discipline relevant to this study is career psychology. Career psychology is the study of career development and career behaviour as an integral part of human development (De Villiers, 2009). Bergh and Theron (2009) describe career psychology as dealing with issues related to the career development of individuals, the nature of

employment and unemployment, career-related matters in the organisation, and non-work-influencing factors, such as family, personality and environmental factors, which impact on employee functioning and development.

Career development is relevant to IOP and career psychology in particular, because as individuals progress through the career development stages, the career and personal choices they make reflect their self-concept. Thus, as individuals select vocations, they attempt to choose a career that represents their own self-image. Consequently, career development is an iterative process, whereby the congruence between self-concept and career increases with each subsequent occupation or job.

2.3.2 Career development models and theories

Fundamental constructs pertinent to women and their career development are conceptualised in chapter four, as well as issues related to understanding the career development trajectories of women in higher education. Other issues covered in the literature review of this study include career development theories and models (see chapter five), and a feminist perspective on career theory (see chapter five). The literature review also presents research on the barriers faced by women in terms of their career development, and the strategies used by women to overcome the identified barriers, in chapter five of this thesis. The career theories discussed include Super and Levinson's age or stage career development theories, Holland's environment and personality fit career development theory, Bandura's social learning theory, and Krumboltz's social learning theory of career counselling. These traditional theories contain unrealistic assumptions about women, which become decontextualised when transposed to women and societies other than those where the theories were developed. Traditional career theories were followed by theories that arose from the feminist movement of the previous century, and lastly, contemporary and postmodern career development theories. These theories were deemed relevant to this study, as they discuss age and stage models, theories of environment and personality fit, social learning theories and its impact on career choices, and the contemporary feminist movement's critique of the traditional theories.

2.3.3 Meta-theoretical constructs

Meta-theoretical constructs stem from philosophies or schools of thought that reflect the nature of the discipline and place the research questions within a conceptual framework (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). They encourage the integration of theory and set parameters for prediction by specific theories and within certain contexts (Abrams & Hogg, 2004). In the empirical context, the research was informed by models and theories in relation to career development in general, and within the higher education context in particular. In the disciplinary context, the research focuses on IO psychology, and career psychology as a field of application. The following meta-theoretical constructs are relevant to these disciplines and this research.

2.3.3.1 Career and career development

Gysbers and More (1981) suggested that the term 'career' encompasses various roles, circumstances and places that one encounters over a lifetime. Herr, Cramer and Niles (2004) postulated that careers are (a) unique to everyone, (b) created by the person's choice and decision, (c) dynamic and unfold throughout one's life journey, (d) integrated entities of prevocational and post-vocational considerations, and (e) interrelated with one's other life roles in the areas of family, community and leisure.
Greenhaus et al. (2019) define career as a mobility path within a single organisation or multiple employers. They postulate that another approach to understanding what the term 'career' means is by viewing it as the property of an individual, rather than an occupation or organisation. Taking these varied interpretations into consideration within the context of this research, I can define a career as a totality of work and leisure, a pattern of work and non-work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life, which may be characterised by consistency, late starts, transitions, breaks, learning and working, and focusing on other non-work-related activities, such as child-rearing and looking after elderly relatives. Career development therefore becomes a self-initiated, lifelong process that is supported by organisations, communities and families, and at the core of career development is the uniqueness of individuals, their varied interests, and life circumstances.

Traditionally, career development held the notion that individuals go through predictable phases in their careers, with each career stage being characterised by a somewhat distinctive set of themes or tasks (Greenhaus et al., 2019). However, in today's terms, this definition can no longer apply, based on the differences in individual priorities, life choices and circumstances, which might force them to either start late, or take breaks, or choose to focus on their careers, thus abandoning all other avenues of life. Therefore, when studying career development, there should be an understanding of such individual differences and preferences. Furthermore, career development cannot be studied in isolation from the environment within which such career development takes place.

2.3.3.2 Women in higher education

Studies on women in HE have been trying to understand how the participation of women in higher education can be increased, and how women can develop their careers in fields previously infiltrated by men, such as science and engineering. Any efforts to advance women in academia should be accompanied by increasing the pool of qualified candidates for occupying such positions. Although there has been a significant increase in the number of women graduates with postgraduate qualifications in recent years (CHE Report, 2017/8), this has not been matched by women's representation in senior academic positions in HE. Women still report several barriers that stifle their progress and advancement academically. The barriers include absence or little of support, in their both families and organisations, societal expectations regarding the role of women, and institutional policies that do not accommodate their family responsibilities. The combination of these factors has resulted in men occupying the academic space more than women, especially in senior positions in academia. For various reasons, such as children rearing, relocating because of their partners' work, fitting in with their partners' careers, taking part-time work, or caring for their elderly parents, women find they always have to choose between family and work, and HE offers no middle ground. Women reported that when they have children, things become even harder to balance (Donovan, Hodgson, Scanlon & Whitelegg, 2005). Women's careers are therefore characterised by breaks, interruptions, late starts, and working part-time as a result of these factors, which somehow affects their career development

(Bimrose & Brown, 2015), and women career development stories are tied to lives of their husbands and children (De la Rey, 2002).

2.3.3.3 Career development trajectories

A trajectory is the path or process of development, and within the context of career development, a career trajectory (or path) can move forward, backward, or remain static, depending on the amount of effort and planning that takes place along the way (Oriol, Brannagan, Ferguson & Pearce, 2018). Another characteristic of a career trajectory is that it does not just happen, but is built and established, which implies that women construct their own careers. Traditionally, career choice and progression were dictated by tradition, socio-economic status, family background and gender. With the evolution of career development, this scenario changed, and organisations took centre stage in the development of their employees. A new paradigm has emerged in this era, where individuals are at the centre of their career development (Greenhaus et al., 2019). It is up to the individual to choose in which field they want to develop themselves, as barriers to access to different careers have been removed. However, the numbers in fields such as science and engineering remain relatively low compared to other fields, due to the historical evolution of these careers (DHET Report, 2017/8). Today, individuals not only choose their careers, but also decide how long they want to stay employed, and whether they want to take breaks and focus on other non-work-related activities. Demographic, economic and societal shifts, combined with technological advances, have changed the way in which people work and how careers are managed.

From this research, I discovered that, in line with Bimrose and Brown (2015), women academics have different career development trajectories, with some being early starters, and others late starters, while others' careers are characterised by interruptions and breaks to accommodate family-related responsibilities. Notwithstanding these career trajectories, I still found women in academia who have made work the focus of their lives, and who have sacrificed or delayed their social needs until later. The findings regarding these different career development trajectories are discussed in detail in chapter six.

2.4 MY RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY AND PARADIGM EXPLAINED

This section addresses the ontological and epistemological assumptions that are conduit to the methodological framework proposed, and channel how this research was designed to gather and analyse data (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). Figure 2.2 below provides an overview of my research paradigm, taking into consideration my philosophical assumptions and the related research paradigms that were chosen (constructivist and critical theory: feminism). In this section, I first explain what a research paradigm entails, and then continue to explain my ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological assumptions. My research paradigm illustrates how my relativist ontology conflated with my social constructionist epistemology and became a launching pad for my exploration of the career development phenomenon in senior women academics.

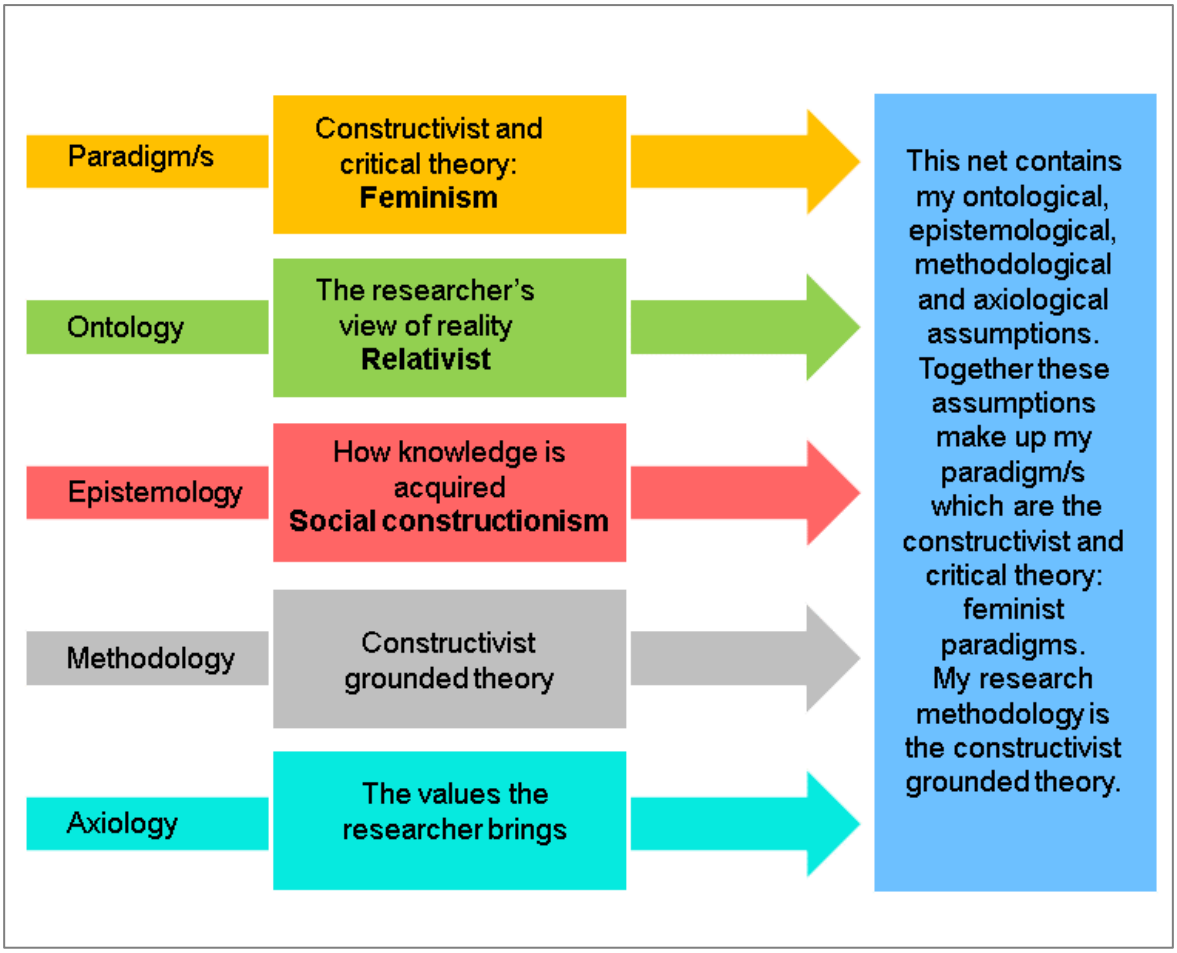

Figure 2.2: My research paradigm framework

2.4.1 Research paradigm defined

Kuhn (1962) is widely acknowledged as the person who coined the concept of a paradigm. He defined a paradigm as an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems associated with corresponding methodological approaches and tools. He stated that the term *paradigm* stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques shared by the members of a community. Maree (2007), on the other hand, defines a paradigm as a set of assumptions and beliefs about the fundamental aspects of reality, which gives rise to a particular worldview. It addresses fundamental assumptions taken on faith, such as beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the knower and the known (epistemology), and assumptions about methodologies. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described as a model or pattern according to which the social sciences view the object of research. Crotty (1998) defines a paradigm as a set of beliefs that guide action. For its holder, it defines the nature of the world, the place of the individual in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. Lastly, Mertens (2014) and Creswell (2014) define it as a basic belief system or worldview that guides action in inquiry or research. These authors reiterate that paradigms differ on the question of the nature of reality (ontology), and how knowledge is created (epistemology), which in turn informs the methods used to collect and analyse the information that is later translated into knowledge (methodology).

Different authors (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Kuhn, 1962; Lincoln et al., 2011; Maree, 2007; Mertens, 2014) agree in principle that a research paradigm can be better understood through discussions of its philosophical assumptions, using ontological, epistemological and methodological questions. Recent studies, such as Creswell (2014), Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Mertens (2014), have now added a fourth question, namely that of axiology. In summary, a research paradigm answers the following philosophical questions:

> The *ontological* question answers the question of how the world came about rather than the analysis of it;
> The *epistemological* question answers the question of what knowledge is and how knowledge is generated;

The *methodological* question answers the question as to how the researcher (would-be knower) goes about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known; and

The *axiological* question is concerned with the values that the researcher is bringing to the research process, and whether the researcher approaches the research setting value-free or value-laden.

For purposes of this research, a paradigm will be defined in its basic sense as the worldview or framework that guides the research process, from conceptualisation of the research subject to the problem statement, research questions, and research process, including the interpretation of results.

2.4.2 My chosen paradigms

Historically, there are significant tensions between post-positivism, interpretivism and critical theory, though this study seeks to incorporate the two families of constructivism and critical theory. The ontological and epistemological assumptions that directed this study are closely aligned with the assumptions underlying constructionism and feminism, which both support qualitative research. These two paradigms were therefore chosen as predominant directives in this study and are discussed in the sections below. Although research has not yet reached the point of full integration of paradigms, the possibility of permeability does however, exist, as illustrated by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), which I have applied in this research. Mertens (2014) argued that the lines between paradigms become more blurred when one examines Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) work, wherein the authors clearly highlighted the connection between qualitative inquiry and social justice and progressive political action (from a critical theory perspective). This research is thus located within a constructivist research paradigm and applies critical theory, in particular the feminist orientation, thus permeating the paradigmic lines.

The section below begins with a discussion of constructivism, using Charmaz's (2011) label of *social constructivism*. I explain the origins of constructivism and follow its evolution, with reference to authors such as Guba and Lincoln (2011), and

contemporary theorists such as Charmaz (2006; 2011) and Denzin and Lincoln (1994; 2011). Lastly, Creswell's (2013) discussion of the critical theory paradigm, and Gilligan's (1982) discussion of feminist theory in particular are outlined. Throughout this section, I explain why these paradigms were deemed appropriate for this research, by highlighting their features. Later, in section 2.5, I explain why grounded theory, as a systematic qualitative research method that seeks to generate new theory to explain a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), was chosen for this study. In this regard, I motivate my choice of a CGT based on the reality that its epistemological foundation lies in subjectivism; its ontological stand repudiates objective reality; and it acknowledges the researcher's role as the co-creator in the construction of knowledge.

From the discussion above, one can deduce that this study bestows credence to the possibility of the researcher talking across paradigms − in this case, constructivism and critical theory, specifically feminism. The proposition of this study incorporated assumptions that are foundational to both constructivism and feminism. Constructivists believe that individuals seek an understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals attach subjective meanings to their experiences. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to investigate the complexity further, rather than narrowing meanings down by dividing them into categories or ideas (Creswell, 2014). The constructivist and critical theory perspectives overlap, and critical theory is an important and productive research tradition of the social sciences (Willis, 2007). I favour interpretivist perspectives, and therefore believed that the constructivist paradigm provided the best framework within which to interpret and conduct this research. However, I also acknowledged the importance of the relationships between and permeability of paradigms, hence the integration of constructivism and feminism as paradigms for this study.

2.4.2.1 Constructivism

The terms constructivism, interpretivism and social constructionism are apt to be used interchangeably, and incorporated under the generic term 'constructivism', particularly by Charmaz (2000, 2006, 2011). Denzin and Lincoln (2011), on the other hand, do not identify social constructivism as another perspective that is different to interpretivism. The viewpoint that this research has adopted is that of constructivism as a paradigm,

and social constructionism as its underlying epistemology. A unique feature of constructivism is the centrality of the interaction between the investigator and the object of the investigation, as it is believed that only through interaction can deeper meanings be uncovered.

According to Young and Collin (2004), constructivism proposes that everyone mentally constructs the world of experience through cognitive processes. Crotty (1998), on the other hand, says constructivism is the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality, are contingent on human practices, being constructed in and out of interactions between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context. It is thus believed that constructivists view the world's reality, not as comparisons, which are objective and exterior factors, but as socially constructed and given meaning by people. In the constructivist world, meaning does not exist essentially in the object. According to constructivists, "before there was consciousness on earth capable of interpreting the world, the world held no meaning at all" (Crotty, 1998, p. 43). Thus, constructivism characterises an approach to human science inquiry and practice that is symbolised by a relational focus accentuating the view that the world people create in the process of social exchange constitutes their reality (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Knowledge is not something that a person has, but is something that people do, as knowledge claims are intelligible and debatable only within a particular context or community (Burr, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) state that dialogue is implied as the compelling factor in the construction of reality, and organisations are viewed as the products of social construction. In essence, constructivism implies interest with the dialogical processes by which people, their values, their reasoning, scientific knowledge and communities are constructed and reconstructed through dialogue (Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008).

2.4.2.2 Critical theory: feminist paradigm

The feminist theories are an essential element in the theoretical framework of this study, in that they explain gender differences between men and women (Anderson & Taylor, 2009; Crossman, 2014; Ritzer & Goodman, 2004), as this knowledge is diagnostic to perceiving the career development of women, and these are thoroughly

discussed in chapter six. The feminist orientation to research is, however, also of paradigmatic concern, as it contains certain assumptions about how the inquiry is conducted and knowledge created. Feminists do not approach their study with the answer already in mind. Instead, they acknowledge that because they live and work in a society that tends to advantage men's viewpoints, they may not necessarily hear and see the realities of women's lives, unless they are specifically looking for them. To this, Stanley and Wise (1990) pointed out that the great power of feminism lies in its ability to make the experiences and lives of women intelligible.

During the process of exploring the literature on feminist psychology, I came across Gilligan (1982), one of the most influential authors on women psychology. Gilligan (1982) criticises sociological and psychological theories as having been developed from a male perspective. Theories formerly thought to be sexually neutral in their scientific objectivity have been found to reflect a consistent observational and evaluative bias (Willis, 2007). Gilligan (1982) cites many examples of dominant theories in psychology that were developed using the male as the norm, including Freud's theory of personality (1915), McClelland's theory of motivation (1961), and Kohlberg's theory of moral development (1958). As these theories were re-examined from a feminist perspective, a new level of awareness developed regarding the importance of giving credence to women's life experiences (Willis, 2007).

Feminist theory asserts that women possess knowledge about their status and experiences that is not available to men. In addition, women are not a homogeneous group of people. Scholars have come to realise that there is no single woman experience, and that different kinds of women, according to their socio-economic status, ethnicity, age and other factors, have different experiences of life (Babbie, 2010). Nevertheless, women still share certain characteristics because of their gender (Babbie, 2010). The gender difference perspective examines how women's location in, and experience of social situations differ from those of men (Crossman, 2014). Liberal feminist theorists (Acker, 1994; Connell, 2002) believe that the different roles assigned to men and women within institutions explain gender differences better, including the gender division of labour in the household.

Crossman (2014) points out that liberal feminists' view marriage as a site of gender inequality, and that women do not benefit from being married as much as men do. Crossman (2014) further argues that the sexual division of labour in both the private and public spheres needs to be altered, for women to achieve equality. Nussbaum and Glover (1995) state that gender inequality theory recognises women's location in the experiences of social situations not only as different, but also as unequal, to those of men. Liberal feminists such as Lather (1991), Ritzer and Goodman (2004) and Crossman (2014) all agree that women have been restricted to the private sphere of the household and have therefore been left without a voice in the public sphere. Even after women enter the public sphere, they are still expected to manage the private sphere, and take care of household duties and child rearing (Crossman, 2014). Feminists seeking to theorise about organisations face a difficult task, because of the deeply embedded gendering of both organisational processes and theory (Acker, 1990).

Feminist research is devoted to revealing how gender connects or is concomitant with the phenomenon of interest. Most often, this focus leads feminist researchers to consider how women experience various aspects of their lives, or how men's experiences affect women's lives. Feminist research again urges feminist researchers to consider the ways in which gender norms are maintained or disrupted by current institutional practices. For example, in HE contexts, this could draw attention to how policies such as sabbatical leave opens new possibilities for gendered parenting and professional roles.

2.4.3 My philosophical assumptions explained

Assumptions are basic principles that are believed to be true, without proof or verification (Polit & Hungler, 1997). It is important that the researcher's assumptions are declared, as the researcher's intentions, goals and philosophical assumptions are inextricably linked with the type of research that is done (Mack, 2010). Furthermore, how one views the constructs of social reality and knowledge affects how one approaches research and uncovers knowledge, and how one evaluates one's own research and that of other researchers studying the same phenomenon. The ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological assumptions that

informed this research are presented below and stem directly from the paradigmatic orientations declared above. As already described in the section above, my philosophy of science can be summarised as how I view the nature of reality (ontology), and the questions that I ask to produce knowledge about this reality (epistemology). In addition, my ontology and epistemology will inform my methodology, which in turn affects the processes I use to gather and analyse data (methods), to arrive at conclusions, as well as the values and beliefs that I bring to the research process (axiology). This section clearly highlights the beliefs, biases and thoughts that I applied in conducting this study.

2.4.3.1 A relativist ontological assumption

Ontology is the researcher's view of reality (Mack, 2010) or the nature of reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Three ontological stances, namely critical realism (Maxwell & Mittapalli, 2010), subtle realism (Hammersley, 1992) and relativism (Collins, 1981) have emerged, with Ritchie et al. (2014) defining "critical or subtle realism and relativism as a variant of realism, influenced by idealism". Cohen and Crabtree (2006, p. 1) write that critical or subtle realism emphasises the existence of a reality that exists independently of human conception, and which is subject to wide critical examination, to achieve the best understanding of that reality. On the other hand, relativism holds that reality can be explained through a series of socially constructed meanings, because there is no single reality outside the human understanding of it (Ritchie et al., 2014).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) state that constructivist research is relativist, transactional and subjectivist. By aligning myself with a relativist ontological view, it means that I agree that there is no objective truth to be known. I therefore subscribe to a diversity of interpretations, unlike realist perspectives, which presuppose an objective and universal truth. As a relativist, I assume that reality is produced through individual interpretation and is dependent on the meaning derived from subjective perception (Blaikie, 2007). Reality is thus the result of social processes accepted as normal in a specific context (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Transactional means that the truth arises from interactions between elements and is a product of these interactions and constructed realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The ontological assumptions underlying the constructivist paradigm are that multiple realities exist in the form of mental

constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them (Guba, 1990). Guba and Lincoln (1985) agree that our individual personal reality, the way we think life is, and the part we are to play in it, is self-created. Patton (1990) also confirmed that there is no separate (or objective) reality for people, which is consistent with relativism − my view of life. I believe that there are what people know their experience is, and what it means. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 110), in explaining the ontology of constructivism as relativist, note the following:

> *Realities are apprehendable in form of multiple, intangible, mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (though factors are often shared among a number of individuals and even across cultures), and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the construction.*

Feminist research, on the one hand, is all about investigating and understanding the world of women's experiences, as related by them (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Stanley and Wise (1993) asserted that what is needed is a woman's language, a language of experience, and such language can only come from the exploration of women's everyday lives, which is in line with the constructivist viewpoint that knowledge is relative and should be generated from the knower of the subject.

Existential and phenomenological feminists focus on how women have been marginalised and defined as the "other" in patriarchal societies (Crossman, 2014). The feminist critique of social science charges that women's lives have been studied and explained within a positivistic, patriarchal paradigm, which has no existential match with the personal, that is, the lived experience (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Therefore, feminists' explanation is simply that displacing the personal with the positivistic has contributed to women's everyday experiences being misconstrued or concealed (Garko & Florida, 1999), a perception that I fully support, and which this research is attempting to refute.

My ontological assumptions are that there is not one reality waiting to be discovered, but rather multiple realities, depending on whose viewpoint one is soliciting, consistent

with Guba and Lincoln (1994) and Patton (1990). Therefore, I align and position myself in an ontological perspective called relativism, which is relevant to the social constructionist epistemology on which this study was based, and which is described below.

2.4.3.2 Epistemological assumptions: subjectivism and social constructionism

Epistemology is defined as the process of how a researcher acquires knowledge (Mack, 2010). Crotty (1998), on the other hand, defines epistemology as the theory of knowledge. It is the relationship between what we see and what we know (Lincoln & Guba, 2011).

In constructivism, the epistemology is transactional and subjectivist (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism means that the inquirer and the inquired are fused into a single entity to co-construct meaning or knowledge. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) summarised this by stating that social constructivists create knowledge through their lived experiences and through interactions with other members of society. As such, constructivists as researchers participate with their subjects in the research process, in order to ensure that they produce knowledge that reflects the participants' reality. Findings are literally a creation of the process of interaction between the two (Guba, 1990).

Constructivists believe that we are shaped by our lived experiences, which will always result in the knowledge we generate as researchers, and in the data generated by our subjects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In my view, valid and acceptable knowledge is information obtained directly from those experiencing the phenomenon being studied, and knowledge is therefore relative. Blaikie (2007) and Mertens (2104) both agree that in constructivism, knowledge is seen to be derived from everyday experiences and meanings attached to these experiences. The experiences of the inquired are thus vital to the enquiry and its implicated thought processes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Corbin and Strauss (2008) state that it is not distance that qualitative researchers want between themselves and participants, but the opportunity to connect with the researcher and the researched at a human level.

I align myself with social constructionism, an epistemological stance that is congruent with the constructivist paradigm, and which focuses on how individuals construct meanings out of their experiences in a social context (Creswell, 2013). Social constructionism as a theoretical perspective is shaped by social science and social justice theories (advocacy and participatory theories) (Creswell, 2013). A social constructionist study often prefers to use qualitative and natural approaches to understand human experience in context-specific settings, both inductively and holistically. Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2011) emphasised that in a constructivist study, the researcher is not independent from the subject of the study but is a passionate participant who interacts with the respondents to construct the outcome. Consequently, I subscribe to multiple truths and realities, as the social world is complex and dynamic, and different people have different perceptions about the world. This results in an outcome of the inquiry that is constructed through the joint effort of the researcher and respondents. In addition, the assumptions of constructivism are likely to be subjective, and the created knowledge is understood to depend on the interaction between the interviewer (and researcher) and the respondents (Mong Ha, 2011).

Critical theory epistemology, on the one hand, believes in a historical reality, which, over time, is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender factors, and crystallised as meaning (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Feminist paradigms view and understand society through the experiences of women and examine the generally deprived status of women in society (Babbie, 2010). Feminist epistemology argues that much of the research in the social sciences has been conducted from a male perspective (Bartky, 1990; Garko & Florida, 1999; Stanley & Wise, 1993). For a feminist researcher located within the constructivist paradigm, the epistemological assumptions are that since all knowledge is positioned in the experiences and context of the researcher, knowledge produced by a male-dominated sociology or anthropology will not be the similar as that produced by women-oriented researchers (Harding, 1998, in Willis, Jost & Nilakanta, 2007). Thus, feminist epistemology is grounded on a subjective ontology, and discards the idea that research is a way of discovering what is objectively ‘real’. As an alternative, the knower is continually prejudiced by his or her situation, consequently all knowledge is situated (Harding, 1998).

In summing up my ontological and epistemological assumptions, I submit that the relativist ontology that I adopted, which was conflated with my social constructionist epistemology, is different from the more realist ontologies and objective epistemologies underlying the grounded theory methodology of authors such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998). Charmaz's CGT is more consistent with my relativist ontology and social constructionist epistemology and is discussed in the section below.

Furthermore, I understand feminism to be a transactional, subjectivist and value-mediated epistemology, which is similar to the constructivist paradigm. According to Creswell (2013), feminism problematise women's diverse situations and the institutions that frame them, with the aim always being to bring to the fore the injustices of society, and conduct research that is transformative in nature.

2.4.3.3 Methodological assumptions

The congruence between a researcher's epistemology, ontology and methodology is critical for the study to be considered as scientific (Cutcliffe & Harder, 2012). Research methodology refers to the process of how new knowledge is sought, the principles of inquiry, and how the inquiry will proceed. By employing appropriate methods, it is possible to obtain knowledge about the world of interest, which is not necessarily generalisable to other contexts. This is because knowledge, in the researcher's opinion, is contextual. I utilised a grounded theory approach to represent the multiple truths in the microcosm of the women participants' lived experience (Charmaz, 2008). This philosophical location acknowledges my role as implicit in the co-production of meaning, and that the participant's stories are conveyed through the researcher's accounts (Bryant, 2009). For this type of research, it is important for humans to be the primary data collection instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As acknowledged in section 1.7 in chapter one, I therefore refer to myself in the first person to recognise my role in such knowledge construction, something that was traditionally not accepted in conventional writing. The traditional writing approaches, however, have a potential of an obscure hidden power relations between research participants and the researcher as an impartial and neutral observer (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). These power relations can result in the perpetuation of oppressive truths through the authority of

voice (Foucault, 1980), and in this research, great care was taken to ensure that the participants' voices do not get lost during analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, as this is a context-related study, participants must be in their natural setting, since their realities are wholes that cannot be understood in isolation from their context (Crotty, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, the process of member checking − a qualitative technique used to establish the tenet of credibility in trustworthiness was done to ensure a rigorous process and thus acceptance of the findings in the research community (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell & Walter, 2016).

In constructivism, hermeneutic or dialectic methods (Rychlak, 1996) are often used, which means that the varying constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutic techniques and are compared and contrasted through a dialectical interchange (Angen, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Angen (2000) states that social constructivist approaches mostly rely on naturalistic methods, namely interviews and observation, followed by the analysis of existing texts, by both researcher and participants, and in some instances the independent verifier, as was the case in this research. These methods ensure that an adequate dialogue between the researchers and those with whom they interact exists, to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality. Similarly, methodology used in critical theory is dialogical and dialectical (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The constructivist grounded theory, as an appropriate methodology within the constructivist and feminist paradigms, is thoroughly discussed in section 2.6 below.

2.4.3.4 Axiological assumptions

All researchers bring their values to a study, but qualitative researchers make their values known (Creswell, 2013). I therefore acknowledge that I did not approach the research process value-free, as already explained in section 1.8 of chapter one. By the time I approached the research scene, I had already done some preliminary review. As qualitative researchers we are known to be more self-disclosing about our writings than quantitative researchers (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen & Liamputtong, 2007). One of the difficulties of being a qualitative researcher is the experience of undertaking sensitive research. It is thus important to first consider what it is that we, as qualitative

researchers, actually do. We go into other people's lives, sometimes at a time of crisis and stress, and we ask them to talk in detail about their experiences (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2009), hence the importance of ethical clearance so that as qualitative researchers we protect ourselves from what we write about and those we write about. As what is written and how it is written, to some extent, reflects my own interpretations, based on the cultural, social, gender, class and political convictions that can have disastrous effects, if not properly managed. I therefore brought this self to the research process, but through the process of reflexivity I was able to protect myself and the quality of my research. The practice of qualitative researchers positioning themselves in their writing is known as reflexivity (Lambert, Jomeen & McSherry, 2010; Tufford & Newman, 2012), whereby researchers acknowledge their biases, values and experiences from the beginning.

I approached the research setting with the pre-conceived idea that the career trajectories of the selected senior women academics are not the same, as they are not a homogeneous group. I believe that women senior academics have experienced development in their careers in academia in different ways, bearing in mind their different backgrounds, the institutions that mentored them, differences in their psychological make-up, differences in terms of their family responsibilities, and other factors that emerged during the collection and analysis of data. Furthermore, I was aware of my own biases and prejudices, based on my career development experiences, and had to keep these in mind, particularly in terms of how they affect my interpretation of the findings. I subscribe to the idea that in the social world, the process of being studied affects people, and that there is a relationship between the researcher and the researched. Therefore, I could not be neutral or produce an objective or privileged account of reality. The findings were thus value-mediated and agreed on between the researcher and the participants through member checking.

In summarising the discussion thus far regarding my philosophical assumptions and research paradigms, this constructivist qualitative research assumes i) a relativist ontology, which means that there are multiple realities; ii) a social constructionist epistemology, which presupposes that the knower and the respondent co-create understandings, and iii) a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures. The data were therefore gathered, explored and analysed in terms of the

criteria for constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Furthermore, in this study, issues that limit women academics' career development and academic success were scrutinised through a critical feminist theoretical lens. Feminism focuses on injustices as they have historically developed and currently exist in our society. Feminist theory places gender at the centre of its analysis, suggesting that gender is a primary organising characteristic of society. Flax (1996) defined feminist theory as being based on the following assumptions:

> men and women have different experiences; women's oppression is not a subset of some other social relationship; the oppression of women is part of the way in which the structure of the world is organised; and the task of feminist theory is to explain how and why this structure evolved.

This acknowledgement of gender's effects on men's and women's private and public lives advocates for different understandings of social phenomena. As Stanley and Wise (1993) argue, the awareness, which inspires [feminism], enables feminists to interpret social reality in ways which may be radically different from other interpretations. Feminist research thus recommends different interpretations of social interactions, and stipulates possibilities for change in higher education, as well as in other settings. The next section explains the research strategy adopted in this study.

2.5 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGY

A qualitative research methodology or strategy is used when the research problem is *how do* and the main question is *what are*, as this calls for a descriptive rather than a prescriptive kind of research (Al Qur'an, 2010). To explicate the qualitative strategy, I followed in this study, its inductive logic, primary assumptions, strengths, and limitations are discussed in this section.

2.5.1 Qualitative inquiry: an inductive logic

Descriptive research therefore requires a theory-building approach, which is inductive in nature, rather than a theory-testing one (deductive) (Perry, 1998). Accordingly, the inductive constructivist paradigm is more appropriate than the deductive positivist paradigm (Al Qur'an, 2010), as this study was more concerned with the actual world, as explained by those who were investigated, with the researcher being the co-creator of knowledge, rather than providing details about the cause and effect relationships between variables.

In this research, the main research question was as follows: *"Tell me about your career journey up to the level where you are now?"* The choice of a research approach should be grounded on the research problem being addressed, besides the skills of the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) argue that if you start by collecting data to explore a phenomenon, with the aim to generate a theory, then an inductive research approach is more appropriate. Saunders et al. (2019) further state that an inductive approach concerns itself with the context wherein events are happening, thus smaller samples are deemed appropriate when using the inductive approach. Furthermore, Yin (1994) suggests that a qualitative strategy is proper when answering the questions *how* and what. While quantitative data generated from using the deductive approach could provide important information about trends and patterns regarding women representation in HEIs in South Africa and elsewhere, understanding the story behind the statistics requires an approach that goes beyond the figures. As Onwuegbuzie, Dickinson, Leech and Zoran (2009) pointed out; quantification reveals only part of the story. By adopting an inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Gabriel, 2013), this study sought to expand on the stories of women academics in South Africa. Since the researcher wanted to develop a theoretical explanation of the data that was collected and analysed, the research project was stories-driven, and an inductive approach was adopted (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Inductive reasoning is congruent with constructivist grounded theory and the theory-building assumptions that underlie this methodology.

From this discussion, it is evident that quantifying the meaning expressed by selected women professors in terms of their career trajectories would not be appropriate, as the intention was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the stories of their lived work-life experiences. A qualitative research strategy was thus considered appropriate for this study, as it allowed me to explore the contextual conditions (social, institutional and environmental) within which people's lives take place, and which may strongly influence all human events, including the career trajectories of women academics. Morse and Field (1995), Patton (2002) and Stuckey (2013) summarised the characteristics of qualitative inquiry in terms of three points, namely: (1) a naturalistic approach, or studying real-world situations; (2) an emergent design and flexibility, or pursuing paths of discovery as they arise; and (3) purposeful sampling, where the sampling is aimed at gaining insight into the research question, is not necessarily generalisable to a population, and where participants are chosen according to specific, purposeful criteria. The typical data collection methods in qualitative research are interviews, observations, and documents or artifacts, which add meaning to, or are used or created in, the research context (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

2.5.2 Assumptions about research in a qualitative inquiry

Qualitative research comprises different orientations and approaches, as well as various intellectual and disciplinary traditions that are grounded in different philosophical assumptions. These different orientations, approaches and assumptions in turn generate new data-gathering and analysis strategies (Creswell, 2013). While the positivist research paradigms underpin quantitative methodology, qualitative methodology is underpinned by social constructivist epistemology and constructivist orientations (Tuli, 2010). Researchers using qualitative designs immerse themselves in a culture or group by observing its people and their interactions, often participating in activities, interviewing key people, taking life histories, constructing case studies, and analysing documents or other cultural artefacts (Tuli, 2010). The idea behind all this is that meaning is embedded in the participants' experiences, and the researcher's ultimate goal is to gain insight into the person or group of persons being studied. When studying individuals, qualitative researchers conduct a study with the aim of reporting multiple realities. As already outlined, my ontological position is that there is no single

reality, and that no external reality exists independently of people's beliefs and understanding of it. I therefore subscribe to the school of thought that says that there is a distinction between what the world is, and individuals' meaning and interpretation of the world. However, I also support Blaikie (2007), who posits that depicting qualitative research as purely inductive is over-simplification. Blaikie (2007) argues that there is neither pure induction nor pure deduction, because as much as inductive researchers generate data and theories, they do not approach the research process with blank minds. The kinds of questions asked, the data generated, and its interpretation will be influenced by assumptions derived from their previous interaction with the phenomenon being studied.

From this discussion, it becomes clear that the emergence of qualitative research as a viable alternative to quantitative, post-positivist methods was not simply an expansion of options at technique level. The fundamental differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches lie primarily at the level of assumptions about research (that is, epistemological and ontological assumptions), rather than at the data level (Creswell, 1994). Qualitative research can be, and usually is, based on a different paradigm or *worldview* to quantitative research. It has different fundamental assumptions, motives for doing research, beliefs about which types of data are the most meaningful to collect, and different approaches to those used in quantitative research in terms of collecting and analysing the data. Crotty (1998) postulated that constructivism and social constructionism are foundational assumptions in a qualitative strategy of inquiry. In fact, qualitative research supports the belief that meaning is constructed through mutual object-subject interaction, and that meaning is a product of a social predisposition to interpret objects in a particular manner.

However, a criticism against qualitative research is that a tradition still exists that adopts the framework and belief systems of quantitative research (Willis, 2007). In this tradition, qualitative research is perceived as an extension of the quantitative paradigm. Nevertheless, qualitative research is different from quantitative research, due to the ability of qualitative research to represent the views and perspectives of the participants in a study, which is supported by the researcher. The events and ideas emerging from qualitative research represent the meanings given to real-life events by the people who live them (Willis et al., 2007). A qualitative design enables researchers

to build a complex and holistic picture through the analysis of words, and the reporting of the specific realities of the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This, however, does not make qualitative research any better than quantitative research, as both have their strengths and weaknesses. It simply depends on the objectives of the research, and on choosing a research design that best meets the research objectives.

Methods used in the natural sciences are positivistic in nature, and not appropriate for studying the social world, because laws and regulations do not govern the social world − rather, it is mediated through meaning and human agency (Ritchie et al., 2014). Unlike positivist or experimental research, which utilises a linear and one-directional sequence of design steps, there is considerable variation in how qualitative research is organised. In general, qualitative researchers attempt to describe and interpret human behaviour based on the words selected by participants, and through the interpretation of their material culture or occupied space (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Therefore, there is a reflexive process underpinning every stage of a qualitative study, to ensure that researcher biases, presuppositions, and interpretations are clearly shown, which is meant to ensure rigor of the research.

2.5.3 Strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research

The goal of any research is to discover the truth about the phenomenon being studied, but the research findings will only be accepted by the research community after due diligence is given to the methods used to arrive at such conclusions. Qualitative research appears to be invaluable for the exploration of subjective experiences of participants, whilst quantitative methods, on the other hand, facilitate the discovery of quantifiable information. These two methodologies therefore possess different strengths and weaknesses. Historically, there is, however, some negative bias towards qualitative research findings, in comparison to quantitative data (Carr, 1994). The burden of proof thus remains with the researcher to ensure that the reliability and quality of the findings are not questioned. The section that discusses quality in this research is found in chapter three of this report.

A qualitative research design has inherent limitations. Miles and Huberman (1994) state that conducting qualitative research is labour-intensive and is characterised by frequent data overload. Researcher bias and the time demands of processing and coding data are often cited as reasons not to adopt a qualitative research design (Anderson, 2010). Reporting on the findings of this research was quite an involved process. An extensive amount of time is spent on the collection and analysis process, due to the labour intensity of the data production and analysis. In addition, when the researcher is the data collection instrument, this means that he or she has to be hands-on throughout the process.

Despite the limitations, qualitative research is also characterised by certain strengths (Anderson, 2010). Anderson (2010) identified the following benefits of qualitative research:

> issues can be examined in detail and in depth; interviews are not restricted to specific questions and can be guided/redirected by the researcher in real time; the research framework and direction can be quickly revised as new information emerges; the data that is obtained based on human experience is powerful and sometimes more compelling than quantitative data; subtleties and complexities about the research subjects and/or topic are discovered, which are often missed by more positivistic enquiries; and data are usually collected from a few cases or individuals, hence the findings cannot be generalised to a larger population. Findings are, however, transferable to another setting.

For this study, the fact that it was done locally, using participants from South African higher educational institutions, made the participants accessible to the researcher and provided rich information based on the realities and lived experiences of the women professors who contributed to this study. Carr (1994) states that qualitative methodologies draw much of their strength from the closeness of the relationship between researcher and respondent. Duffy and Chenail (2009) agreed that the strength of such an interactive relationship is that the researcher obtains first-hand experience, which provides valuable and meaningful data. As the researcher and the subject spend more time together, the data are more likely to be honest and valid (Bryman, 1988). This interaction can even have empowerment outcomes for both the

researcher and the researched (Carr, 1994). Supporting this argument is the study conducted by Baruch (1981), which revealed that time and the subsequent relationship built between the researcher and the subjects are crucial for a genuine understanding of the problem being investigated. Thus, the relationship between myself as the researcher and the researched was the major strength of this qualitative inquiry. The weakness of such a close relationship lies in the likelihood that it may become pseudo-therapeutic, thereby complicating the research process and extending the responsibilities of the researcher (Ramos, 1989). Listening to participants sharing their emotional issues, which included unsupportive working climates, divorces (in some cases, more than one divorce), and children suffering as the result of lack of support at home, required a lot of emotional intelligence on my part. In some instances, I sensed the reluctance of participants to divulge certain information, as it was too emotional. I had to constantly guard against the possibility of becoming enmeshed with subjects (Sandelowski, 1986). In such cases, researchers usually have difficulty separating their own lives from those of their subjects, which results in subjectivity (Cormack, 1991). In its extreme form, this is referred to as 'going native', where the researcher loses his or her awareness of being a researcher, and becomes a participant (Bryman, 2012). However, I entered the research scene well prepared for that possibility and tried at all times to gain a better understanding of the participant. There were moments when participants cried, thinking of the price they have paid for their success, and the challenges they had to endure, especially with regard to failed relationships, and having to endure hostile working environments, with little support for their ambitions. I consistently reflected on my personal thoughts and feelings in response to each interview by writing in my self-reflective diary, and when necessary, discussed these issues with my supervisors.

The strength of this research is found in the claim that there were few threats to external validity, as subjects were studied in their natural setting, and fewer controlling factors were encountered, in comparison with quantitative research conditions (Sandelowski, 1986). Again, I was immersed in the context and subjective states of the participants, which assisted in ensuring that the data were representative of what the participants said (Carr, 1994). Paradoxically, the closeness with the participants can be a threat to the validity of the study, if the researcher is unable to maintain the distance required to describe or interpret experiences in a meaningful way. The risk of

closeness, however, is worth it, as argued by Duffy and Chenail (2009), because of the high level of validity achieved by employing qualitative methodologies. More on rigour of this research is clarified in section 3.9 of the succeeding chapter.

2.6 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY

Having decided on a qualitative research strategy, I then had to choose the most appropriate research approach for my research questions. Creswell (2014) states that good qualitative research employs one or more traditions of inquiry, which he also refers to as research approaches. Creswell (2013) identified the following five major research approaches: biography; phenomenological study; grounded theory; ethnography; and case study. Traditions of inquiry or research approaches have also been referred to as research methodologies (Wertz et al., 2011). Grounded theory, one of the more prominent research approaches (Creswell, 2013; Wertz et al., 2011), constituted the research methodology applied in this study. In particular, in line with my constructivist research paradigm, I chose constructivist grounded theory, and this constitutes the focus of the discussion in the section below.

Grounded theory focuses on generating a substantive theory about a phenomenon, and since the ultimate objective of this study was to generate a career development theory of women academics, GT was deemed the appropriate research methodology. GT is hypothesis-generating, and not hypothesis-testing (Silverman, 2000). Furthermore, GT is inductive, as it focuses on processes and the actions and interactions of people in relation to a particular topic, with the ultimate goal of developing a theory about that process. Grounded theory is useful when current theories about social reality are either inadequate or non-existent. The literature may have models or theories available, but these have usually been developed or tested on samples or populations elsewhere (Charmaz, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Glaser & Holton, 2004).

Grounded theory is an acclaimed qualitative methodology, despite questions raised about its epistemological assumptions and methods of knowledge generation (Silverman, 2011). The term ‘grounded’ refers to the idea that the theory that emerges from the study is derived from and grounded in data that have been collected in the

field, rather than taken from the research literature (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Different versions of GT evolved through time and are depicted in Table 2.1 below.

2.6.1 Evolution of grounded theory

Grounded theory is a groundbreaking methodology, comprising of three predominant traditions that evolved over time: classic; Straussian; and constructivist grounded theory. Despite having the same roots, and sharing several of the original methodological techniques, classic, Straussian, and CGT have nevertheless diverged to such an extent that they are neither identical nor compatible methodologies (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). Contrasting philosophical backgrounds and conflicting methodological tactics differentiate them from each other (Kenny & Fourie, 2015). On the other hand, Walsh, Holton, Bailyn, Fernandez, Levina and Glaser (2015) identified four different grounded theory approaches: classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1978); the grounded theory of Strauss and Corbin (1990), sometimes referred to as the Straussian grounded theory; constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000), and feminist grounded theory (Wuest, 1995).

According to Charmaz (2000), Glaser (1967), Breckenridge et al. (2012), Melia (1996), Strauss and Corbin (1978), and Wuest (1995), grounded theory was first developed in the 1960s by two American sociologists, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss. Following methodological disagreements, Glaser and Strauss legendarily parted ways, each professing their own 'versions' of the original methodology. While Strauss, along with his new collaborator Juliet Corbin, made some significant changes to the methodology, Glaser is considered to have stayed faithful to the methodology in its original form. Barney Glaser therefore uses the term 'classic grounded theory' to refer to any of his grounded theory work. Other authors have also developed their own versions of the methodology, including the constructivist (Kathy Charmaz) and feminist grounded theory (Judith Wuest).

Thus, despite the initial collaboration of Glaser and Strauss (1967), which produced GT, the two authors ultimately disagreed on the meaning and procedures of GT. Glaser criticised Strauss's approach to GT as being too prescriptive and structured (Glaser, 1992). Grounded theory as a methodology has evolved since the days of Glaser and

Strauss (1967) and has seen many developments subsequent to its inception. Contemporary versions of the GT, such as CGT, adopted inductive methodological strategies, but also considered methodological developments in qualitative inquiry over the past decades (Silverman, 2011). As a result, CGT adopts a different stance towards the research process and product than earlier grounded theorists had adopted (Silverman, 2011). Charmaz (2014) introduced the constructivist perspective to the conversation on GT. Charmaz (2014) argues that Glaser and Strauss (1967) never paid attention to how the researcher affects the research process, produces data, represents the data to the participants, and positions his or her analysis as the researcher, which made a major contribution to the GT debate. Charmaz (2014), like Clarke (2005), sought to reclaim GT from its positivist underpinnings (Creswell, 2013).

After Strauss's death in 1996, Corbin published works that seemed to place more emphasis on the symbolic interaction roots of GT (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In the book, *Basics for qualitative research*, Corbin demonstrated a shift to a transactional and subjective epistemological viewpoint, because she noted that humans shape their institutions and create and change their world through action and interaction (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The Straussian method made GT a method of application (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1994), rather than innovation (Charmaz, 2006), although Corbin (in Corbin & Strauss, 2008) reflected on how her approach to research has changed. Corbin (2008) confessed to having been influenced by the methodological prescriptions of the earlier decades, which shaped her earliest writings. Corbin (2008) stated that these methodological prescriptions led qualitative researchers to study data to find the theory embedded in them, whilst maintaining objectivity (Charmaz, 2011). This confirmed Charmaz's (2006) earlier contentions that Corbin and Strauss' (1990) editions had objectivist threads. Corbin and Strauss (2008) later endorsed reflexivity, took a value stance that furthers social justice, and claimed a belief in multiple realities, as is evidenced in her more recent writings (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, 2015). Ultimately, Corbin and Strauss (2015) endorsed the CGT, as described by Charmaz (2011). By making use of the more systematic, analytic procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1994), I sought to systematically develop a theory that explains process, action or interaction on a topic.

Table 2.2: *Versions of Grounded Theory*

Classical	Straussian	Constructivist	Feminist
Glaser & Strauss, 1967	Strauss & Corbin, 1990	Charmaz, 1995	Wuest, 1995
	Strauss & Corbin, 1994	Charmaz, 2000	
		Charmaz, 2006	
		Bryant & Charmaz, 2007	
		Silverman, 2011	

Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory (2011; 2014) supports a constructivist and interpretive perspective of reality, and aligns to my paradigm for this study, as discussed in section 2.4. Charmaz (2011) mentions that GT has become an evolving general qualitative method with three versions: objectivist, constructivist and post positivist. Objectivist GT shares an emphasis on constructing emergent concepts, but emphasises positivist empiricism with researcher neutrality, while aiming for abstract generalisations that are independent of time, place and specific people (Glaser, 1978, 1998, 2001). Unlike many positivists of the past, Glaser (1978) demonstrated little concern for establishing criteria for data collection, or for evaluating its quality. Bryant and Charmaz (2007) further assert that Glaser and Strauss' (1967) position was that generating a GT was a way of arriving at a theory suited to its uses, rather than a theory generated by logical deduction from a priori assumptions. Their criticism of the then deductive reasoning did not lie in existing philosophical or methodological terms. Instead, Glaser and Strauss (1967) pointed to the disappointment of the deductive approach to generate new theories, which was, according to them, the key issue. This became their main contribution to the evolution of GT. Charmaz's development of a substantive theory in a GT study therefore represents the 'middle ground' between positivism and postmodernism, as it "assumes the relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims towards interpretive understanding of subject's meanings" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 250). Charmaz (2008, p. 251) defines CGT in the following three points:

- grounded theory strategies need not be rigid or prescriptive;

- a focus on meaning while using grounded theory furthers, rather than limits, interpretive understanding; and
- Grounded theory strategies can be adopted without embracing the positivist leanings of earlier proponents of grounded theory.

From the above discussion, it is evident that despite sharing major GT principles, *classic, Straussian, and CGT* are not identical or transposable entities. Their incompatibility is based on three main factors: to begin with, their contending coding procedures, secondly, their divergent philosophical locations, and thirdly, their divergent use of literature (Kenny & Fourie, 2015).

In CGT, the researcher and participants co-construct the data through interaction. The data therefore reflects their historical, social and situational locations, together with those of the researcher (Charmaz, 2011). Charmaz (2013) advocates a social constructivist perspective that includes an emphasis on diverse local worlds, multiple realities, and the complexities of particular worlds, views and actions. Charmaz (2011) states that CGT adopts the methodological strategies of Glaser and Strauss' (1967, 1978) classic statement, *but* integrates relativity and reflexivity throughout the research process. As such, this approach, according to her, loosens GT from its positivist, objectivist roots, and brings the researcher's roles and actions into view.

2.6.2 Fundamental elements of a grounded theory study

Charmaz's CGT claims to use the guidelines of GT provided by Corbin and Strauss (2015) as tools for analysis, while not subscribing to their objectivist, positivist assumptions, as there are certain fundamental elements common to all GT studies, regardless of which GT version the researcher uses. The goal of grounded theory is to find a theory that is intimately linked to the evidence, so that the resultant theory is likely to be consistent with empirical data. Data collection, coding rationale, integration of categories, abstracting from the data, and construction of a theory are all key elements of any GT study. Thus, theoretical sampling, iterative data collection and analysis, constant comparison, coding and memoing strategies, theory development, and rigor in GT studies are elements that will confront any GT researcher (Birks & Mills, 2015; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1987).

Despite their divergent philosophical underpinnings, the versions of GT have certain similarities. The use of grounded theory is founded on the premise that the generation of theory at various levels is indispensable for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978). This requires that the researcher demonstrates theoretical sensitivity (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Holton, 2004; Holton, 2007), by being well grounded in relevant technical literature, as well as from personal and professional experience in the collection and analysis of data (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Whether different versions agree or not in terms of when literature should be reviewed, they all agree that the theory should either confirm or reject previous findings, or address gaps identified in previous research. It is therefore important that GT researchers do a literature review, regardless of whether it is prior to, during, and/or after the empirical investigation. Authors such as Glaser and Strauss (1967), Glaser (1998), and Strauss and Corbin (1990) feel strongly that literature should be reviewed only after the empirical investigation, so that the findings may not be channeled in a particular direction. Glaser (1998) argues that when literature is read prior to field research, whose purpose is generating new theory, the preliminary literature review may twist the emerging theory from its true discovery path, as it will influence the findings. Strauss (1987), on the other hand, believed that the use of literature can be an early influence, and may be used to stimulate theoretical sensitivity and generate hypotheses (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

Birks and Mills (2015), Bryant and Charmaz (2007) and Glaser (1978) identified the fundamental elements of GT or salient features of a GT research design. These elements are common to all GT studies, regardless of which version one uses, namely:

- entering the research setting without a pre-conceived hypothesis;
- Collecting and analysing data concurrently. Fundamental to a grounded theory research design is the process of concurrent data generation or collection and analysis. To achieve this, the researcher generates or collects some data with an initially purposive sample. The data from these initial encounters is coded before more data is collected or generated, and the process of analysis repeated. It is this concept that differentiates grounded theory from other types of research designs, which require the researcher to either initially collect and

subsequently analyse the data, or to construct a theoretical proposition and then collect data to test their hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

- Constantly comparing the emerging data with the data already collected, to identify similarities or differences. This entails, for example, the constant comparison of incident to incident, incident to codes, codes to codes, codes to categories, and categories to categories. This is termed constant comparative analysis and is an iterative analytic process that continues until a grounded theory is fully integrated.
- Grounded theory methods are referred to as inductive, in that they are a process of building theory up from the data itself. Induction of theory is achieved through successive comparative analyses (Birks & Mills, 2015).
- Theoretical sampling to fine-tune data collection procedures. Researchers use theoretical sampling to focus and feed their constant comparative analysis of the data. During this iterative analytic process, it will become apparent that more information is needed to saturate categories under development. This often occurs when one wants to find out more about the properties of a category, conditions under which a particular category may exist, the dimensions of a category, or the relationship between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Theoretical sampling then directs where (either in literature or through further participant sampling) the researcher obtains information to saturate the understanding of a category.
- The use of coding, categorising, and ‘memoing’ (that is, notes written for the researcher’s own use), to document emerging ‘themes’ (that is, key variables and patterns in the data), interrelationships, and theoretical propositions. Memos have been wonderfully described as 'intellectual capital in the bank' (Clarke, 2005, p. 85). Memos are written records of a researcher's thinking during the process of undertaking a grounded theory study. As such, they vary in subject, intensity, coherence, theoretical content, and usefulness to the finished product. Memo writing is an ongoing activity for grounded theorists, as memos are generated from the very early stages of planning a study until its completion. Over time, memos are transformed into grounded theory findings. Writing consistently and profusely helps to build intellectual assets (Birks & Mills, 2015; Holton, 2007).

- Coding strategy: All GT studies have a coding strategy, which involves moving reiteratively through different phases of coding (Holloway, 2008). Codes become categories when data is theoretically saturated. At this stage, new data analysis returns codes that only fit in existing categories, and these categories are sufficiently explained in terms of their properties and dimensions (Birks & Mills, 2015; Holton, 2007).
- Using a review of literature as one element of data collation, and the formation of a 'theory' (that is, a conceptual model which explains the findings in an abstracted format, thus offering a broader theoretical understanding of the phenomenon). There are differences, however, in terms of whether literature should be reviewed prior to or after the field research.
- Theoretical sensitivity is a common feature of all GT studies. The ability to generate concepts from data and to relate them according to normal models of theory in general, and theory development in particular, is the essence of theoretical sensitivity. Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the course of the research (Glaser & Holton, 2004).

2.6.3 Finding the version of grounded theory that resonates with the researcher's assumptions about research

The encounters I met as a novice researcher was being conclusive about which GT approach to pick, especially regarding their differing philosophical assumptions, manner of approaching theory, and coding procedures. However, my epistemological, ontological and axial assumptions guided my choices. I was frustrated by the strain of analysing and depicting huge amounts of data, given that this was my first encounter with grounded theory. At the beginning of my doctoral studies, I did not realise how skilled I was supposed to become to traverse the stretched, wavering walk past the dark forest of the research process using the GT method. Given the different versions on how to proceed with the GT process, an inexperienced researcher such as myself got lost. Consequently, I exhausted time reading and understanding the different versions of GT, and what they meant for this research, to choose the GT method that resonates with my research objectives and me. Cutcliffe and Harder (2012) noted,

however, that many scholars seem to dodge this challenge completely, electing vague combinations of features from each version, without regard for their fundamental incompatibilities. In the end, this cocktail approach to GT poses a substantial threat for novice researchers, as the inability to reference useful GT studies makes it complicated to prepare for the realities of carrying out one's own GT research (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009).

During the formative days of this research, I had phenomenology in mind as the research approach, because of its focus on lived experiences. Another feature that attracted me to a phenomenological approach was that it acknowledges the subjective nature of reality (Jasper, 1994). This resonated with my research philosophy and reflected my intention to explore the experiences of senior women academics from their perspectives. Phenomenology is attributed to the founding thoughts of Edmund Husserl (1913), although philosophers later modified this, as well as writers such as Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1945) (cited in Baker, Wuest & Stern, 1992). Phenomenology embraces the notion that reality is subjective, as people inextricably connect objects with their consciousness of them (Creswell, 2013), which again resonates with my thinking about research.

Upon reading the literature, I learned that while narrative research focuses on individual stories told by the participants, phenomenology emphasises the commonality of experiences, as narrated by individuals. GT, on the other hand, takes phenomenology a step further by moving beyond description and the generation or discovery of a theory (Creswell, 2013), which Corbin and Strauss (2008) called a "unified theoretical explanation". In addition, participants become part of the process of developing the theory, which resonated with me and my constructivist assumptions (as explained in section 2.4). In support of such a co-construction of truth, Creswell (2013, p. 83) stated that the key idea is that theory development does not "come off the shelf" but is rather generated or grounded in data from participants who have experienced the process.

Being new to GT, the process of understanding the different methodologies and versions of GT was a daunting task for me. I had to decide which GT methodology fitted best with my philosophy of science, as research indicates that there is a direct

link between one's philosophy of science and one's methodology selection and study objectives (Silverman, 2011). It took a while for me to review the literature on GT, before I was comfortable enough to decide which GT approach would work best for me and help me to achieve what I wanted to achieve through this research.

At some stage, I came to an expressed understanding of my philosophy of science, as discussed in sections 2.4, which originated in my ontological and epistemological beliefs. These beliefs were supposed to lead me to a specific research orientation, which in turn guided my choice of research methods and strategies. Consequently, I chose CGT, as it resonated with my research philosophy and research objectives. What I like about CGT is that Charmaz (2000) refashioned the methodology of GT by reclaiming its potent tools from their positivist origins, to forge a more flexible, intuitive, and open-ended methodology, which dovetails with a constructivist paradigm.

Charmaz (2006, 2008) clearly defines her ontological, epistemological and methodological position. Her CGT is unambiguously underlined by a relativist ontology, which presupposes the existence of manifold social realities (Charmaz, 2008), and this resonates with my ontological assumptions. Furthermore, Charmaz emphasises that her epistemological position unequivocally endorses the researcher and participant's co-construction of knowledge and mutual interpretation of meaning, with the objective of fashioning an interpretive depiction of participants' experiences (Charmaz, 2008), which is consistent with my social constructionist epistemology. What was new to the researcher was the fact that she was supposed to be the co-creator of knowledge with the participants. In the next section, I elaborate on the affinity of GT to my feminist orientation.

2.6.4 Applying the constructivist and feminist paradigms in my grounded theory study

My research incorporated a CGT approach, albeit within a feminist paradigm or orientation, as described in section 2.4 above. A basic principle of CGT is to give a voice to participants. I have based my discussions on the works of Plummer and Young (2010), Wuest (1995), Corbin and Strauss (2015), and Charmaz (2012). Plummer and Young (2010) attempted to demonstrate the epistemological affinity between feminist

inquiry and GT. Just as feminist perspectives have evolved over time, GT has shifted from its original positivist and post-positivist roots. Charmaz (2005, in Plummer & Young, 2010) claims that Glaser's (1967, 1978) position came close to traditional positivism, while Strauss and Corbin's (1990, 1994) position moved into post-positivism, and Charmaz (2006, 2012) assumed a constructivist stance in GT. Plummer and Young (2010) state that it is this shift towards a more interpretive and constructivist stance that makes GT fit perfectly with feminist inquiry. Charmaz (2006) has encouraged grounded theorists to incorporate the multiple voices, views and visions of participants in rendering their lived experiences, thus deviating CGT significantly from the original intent of the classic GT. She grounded her argument on Glaser (2002), who postulated that the purpose of GT is not to tell participants' stories, quite the reverse; it identifies and conceptually explain constant behavioural patterns in an attempt to resolve an important matter. This does not suggest that classic GT was not concerned with participant perspectives, however, the key dissimilarity, is that participant perspectives are explored, not from a descriptive or interpretive approach, but with the aim of raising these perspectives to a conceptual level (Glaser, 2002). Furthermore, in their latter works, Corbin and Strauss (2008; 2015) assume a relativist ontological position that appreciates multiple social realities, which further resonates with my research intentions. In Corbin and Strauss (2008, pp. 10-11), Corbin states the following:

> *I agree with the constructivist viewpoint that concept and theories are constructed by researchers out of stories that are constructed by research participants … I want to bring social change and make person's lives better … I agree with feminists in that we don't separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis we do.*

This reinforces the fact that Corbin and Strauss' (2008) version of GT unquestionably moved towards the interpretive paradigm, and the concern for feminist inquiry and social change was reflected in their critical theory orientation to bring about social change. I therefore chose CGT over other GT versions, because embracing multiple realities does indeed bring about social change, and in acknowledgement of the fact that we do not separate who we are as people from the research that we do.

Constructivist grounded theory is consistent with postmodern feminist epistemology's recognition of multiple explanations of reality (Evans, 2013). Rather than accepting common theoretical perspectives, CGT researchers ask: *What is going on here?* Constructivist grounded theorists investigate the core phenomenon or basic social process that accounts for most of the variation in behaviour (Charmaz, 2006). Wuest (1995) also supports the linkage between CGT and feminist epistemology, by stating that CGT is coherent with a postmodern feminist epistemology regarding the recognition of multiple justifications of reality. Wuest (1995) emphasises that feminism is not a research method, but rather a perspective that can be applied to traditional disciplinary methods. Wuest (1995) adds, however, that feminist epistemology is not singular. Harding (1998) identified three feminist epistemologies: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint, and feminist postmodernism. Feminist empiricism seeks to discover a more objective truth, by eliminating such biases as gender, race and class from the research process. From a feminist standpoint, knowledge is shaped by the social context of the knower, and the perspective of groups marginalised by race, gender or class is more complete, because it reflects the experience of the disadvantaged within the dominant culture (Harding, 1998). Although postmodern feminism is also concerned with bias, this position argues that there is not one single truth (Harding, 1998). Women's experiences vary according to characteristics such as race, class, location, sexual orientation, and education (Kang, 2012).

Koro-Ljungberg and Douglas (2008) describe an increasing interest in postmodernism and post-structuralism by researchers who use qualitative methods. It is my personal belief that there is no single reality, rather multiple realities, and that reality is subjectively experienced based on individual perceptions, frames of reference, values and circumstances consistent with Starks & Trinidad (2007) and Terre Blanche et al. (2006). Therefore, the implication is that all individual women professors' experiences of their career development trajectories will be dissimilar based on their subjective realities.

Constructivist grounded theory strategy emphasises theory as process − that is theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product, which is consistent with Glaser and Strauss' (1967) reality of social interaction and the structural context. According to Wuest (1995), this is in line with Scott's (1990) assertion that feminist

theory must reflect changes in patriarchy over time. The epistemological underpinnings of feminist theory, according to Campbell and Bunting (1991), are consistent with CGT. Campbell and Bunting (1991) acknowledge that as knowers of their experience, women's voice thus represents a legitimate source of knowledge. Constructivist grounded theory on its own was not specifically developed to give women a voice, but in CGT, the investigator interprets the perspectives and voices of the people studied through the development of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). This supports the feminist epistemological belief that participants are experts on their experience, and that subjective experience is valid data, as described by Wuest (1995).

Constructivist grounded theory researchers do not only chronicle the perspectives of the people being studied, in this case, senior women academics, nonetheless further accept responsibility for the *researcher's* interpretive role. Researcher bias as the factor in influencing research questions and analysis, is the underlying feminist epistemology. However, reflexivity as a principle of CGT plays a crucial part in managing researcher bias.

Up to this point, the focus has been on explaining GT and its affinity with feminist thinking. However, I will now explain the specific grounded theory analytic coding procedure employed in this study, followed by the manner in which I approached the use of theory.

2.7 GROUNDED THEORY ANALYTIC STRATEGY AND CODING PROCEDURE APPLIED IN THIS STUDY

In GT studies, data analysis starts the moment the first data is collected by the researcher, the idea being that whatever emerges out of the analysis will shape subsequent sampling decisions. As noted by Creswell (2013) and Corbin and Strauss (2015), while the researcher collects data, the analysis begins. The participants chosen for the study were thus theoretically sampled, to help me generate the theory. When researchers sample theoretically, they go to places, persons, and situations that will provide information regarding the concepts about which they want to learn more (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Corbin and Strauss (2015) further state that unlike conventional methods of sampling, qualitative researchers using theoretical sampling do not go out and collect all the data before beginning with the analysis. Data collection

and analysis thus constitute an iterative process, whereby the researcher moves back and forth between selecting cases for data collection and engaging in preliminary data analysis, until all sampled cases are finished. Theoretical sampling is discussed in more detail in chapter three of this report.

I adopted Charmaz's CGT approach during data analysis. In stark contrast to Straussian GT, Charmaz (2008) resisted a concrete, rule-bound, prescriptive approach to coding, arguing that this stifle and suppresses the researcher's creativity. Instead, she fashioned highly adaptable coding guidelines, which endorsed an "imaginative engagement with data" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 168). Charmaz stresses the principle of flexibility in particular, insisting that the analyst must "learn to tolerate ambiguity" and "become receptive to creating emergent categories and strategies" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 168). As illustrated in the diagram below, she proposes a fluid framework, with "at least two stages" to coding (Charmaz, 2008, p. 159).

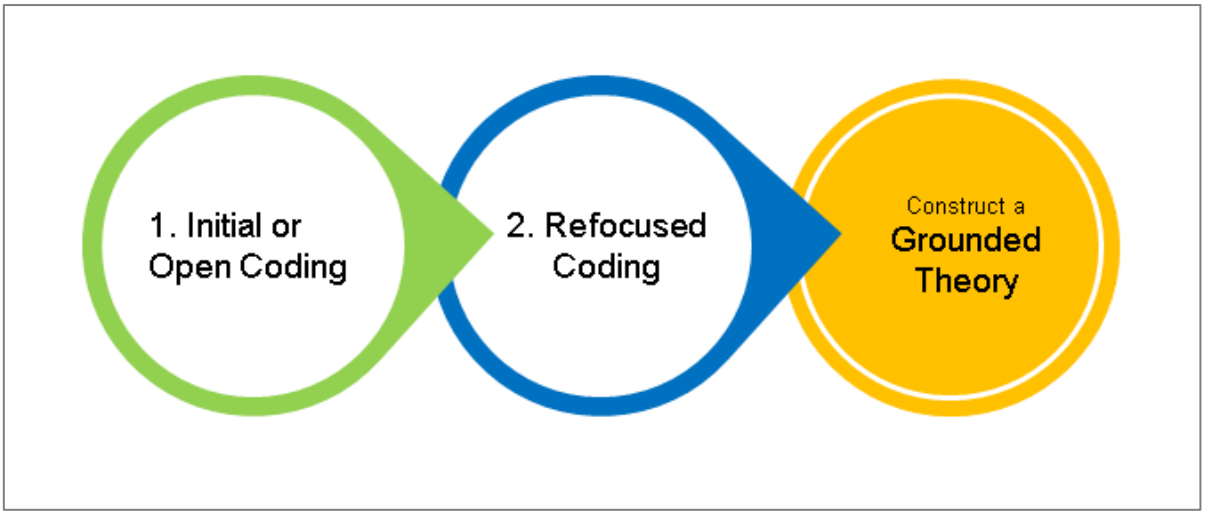

Figure 2.3: Charmaz's coding procedure (Charmaz, 2008)

Given the iterative processes of data collection and analysis in GT, as the primary researcher, I was directly involved in the data, repeatedly reading, analysing and categorising it, and identifying broad themes, as well as coding the data, elaborating on it, and identifying relationships between emerging themes and factors (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2007). I analysed the data manually, moving back and forth through the data during analysis, until a point of theoretical saturation was achieved (Terre Blanche et al., 2007). This enabled me to gain insight into, and a

deeper interpretation and understanding of, the data, to ensure exhaustive conclusions (Terre Blanche et al., 2007). During the open coding phase, I went through the interview transcriptions line by line, and labelled them in relation to the stated research objectives. I asked two relevant questions, namely: *what is the chief concern of all the participants, and how do they resolve it*? This line-by-line analysis is typical of open coding in classical GT (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), and resulted in a list of numerous codes. As part of the open coding phase, codes were reviewed, compared and categorised according to similarities and overlaps in meaning, as well as their relevance to the research objectives.

I then moved to the next stage, which is refocused coding. I identified recurring codes that were substantial in revealing the career development trajectories of senior women academics. I elevated these codes to provisional theoretical categories, which successively had to go through selective or focused coding through the GT techniques of theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and memo writing (Charmaz, 2008). Memo writing is vital to the process of constructing a theory, as it allows the researcher to scrutinise codes and categories, highlight determining conditions, and trace progression and consequences (Charmaz, 2008). Memos furthermore document "gaps in the data" and help develop conceptual "conjectures" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 166). Thus, I wrote and sorted memos as part of capturing and unfolding the process of interpreting the phenomena, conceptualising themes and their interrelatedness, and ultimately constructing a theory. At times, I also related to the more systematic, analytic procedures of Strauss and Corbin (1994), as I sought to systematically develop a theory that explains process, action or interaction on a topic. As data collection and analysis were iterative processes, I conducted interviews and collected data until the categories were saturated. Corbin and Strauss (1990) define a category as the unit of information composed of events, happenings and instances, where the researcher collects and analyses observations and documents. Coding, as applied in this study's data analysis, is deliberated in more detail in chapter three.

2.8 MANNER OF APPROACHING THEORY

As a beginner, I also had to contend with what is practical and acceptable regarding literature review, especially the notion of theoretical sampling. While Glaser and

Strauss (1967) suggest that researchers should avoid having predetermined ideas concerning literature for their topics, doctoral researchers are unlikely to get approval from their supervisors or ethical committee if they do not demonstrate knowledge of extant literature on their topic (Kilbourn, 2006; Piantanida & Garman, 1999). Therefore, I was initially unsure as to whether I should review literature prior to or after the investigation. Charmaz (2006) recommended display of a thorough literature review preceding conducting research as valuable for theoretical sensitivity, and therefore, on many accounts, I found that Charmaz' s CGT resonated with my intentions. Based on her views regarding the literature review, philosophical assumptions and coding procedures, I chose CGT. I can therefore acknowledge that I entered the research scene with prior knowledge of the career development of women academics, which was crucial for gaining in-depth insights and understanding of what kind of questions to ask. As a prerequisite for the postgraduate research proposal, I conducted a preliminary literature review. This inevitably influenced my thinking about career development of women academics from a feminist perspective and impacted on how I decided to approach the study. As already discussed in section 2.6, in deciding on which GT approach to adopt, I had to consider my research philosophy, preferred coding procedures, and manner of approaching theory, and eventually settled on CGT. I then conducted a further literature review, after having gathered data and started with open coding. At the time of starting to analyse the first transcript with open coding, I once again commenced with my scrutiny of the literature.

Theoretical sensitivity is central to generating GT. Constant comparison lies at the heart of GT and theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), driving the collection of additional data until the researcher feels that "theoretical saturation" has been reached (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). I kept this in mind as I reiteratively moved between data collection and analysis processes. According to Glaser (1978, p. 42), theoretical sensitivity "sensitises a researcher to understand what is going on with the phenomenon under study not only to use analytical process, personal and professional experience, but also literature". I therefore continued my reading of the career development literature during and after data analysis. To demonstrate the influence of theory on this study, I present literature on women in academia, as depicted in chapter four, and the career development theories and models – chapter five, preceding the results chapter six, preceding the presentation of chapter seven on the substantive

career development theory. This reflects the integration of the literature during the preliminary stages of the research, before the data collection process started, during the writing up of the research report, when data analysis commenced, and during the interpretation of results.

Furthermore, as noted in the literature, theory development may be the most difficult stage of a GT study (Charmaz, 2006), as the GT literature is vague about theory development. Subsequently, inexperienced researchers might imagine that straight after coding, a theory will spontaneously emerge. That was not my experience, as I wrestled to develop and conceptualise a theory from the data. There are also time pressures, as postulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), when using GT methods, since the time involved can be unpredictably extensive. For researchers to develop robust studies using GT methods, they must have considerable time to develop their research proposals, research designs, gather and analyse data, code and develop theories from the data (McCallin, 2003). I also experienced the complexity of this process. Charmaz (2006) hypothesised that the process of coding and theory development ideally takes months, or in some instances, even years (Charmaz, 2006), which was also my experience.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The emphasis of this chapter was on mapping out my research journey and presenting the research design that guided this study. In this chapter, the purpose, disciplinary boundaries, meta-theoretical constructs, my underlying philosophical assumptions and chosen research paradigms, the qualitative research design and constructivist grounded theory research methodology/approach were thoroughly discussed. Furthermore, I motivated my choice of coding procedures, and the way theory was approached in conducting this grounded theory study. To collecting the needed data, appropriate method/s must be chosen, in order to achieve the research objective (Gabriel, 2013). This will be the focus of the ensuing chapter, where I present the natural account of the research process.

CHAPTER THRE
A NATURAL ACCOUNT OF THE RESEARCH JOURNEY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sketches a natural account of my research journey, which is a continuation of the journey that was mapped out in chapter two. Its intention is to grant the reader with an opportunity to grasp how this research process unfolded. As outlined in the preceding chapter, GT methodology was applied, which guided my sampling, data collection and data analysis decisions. I present herein the operational steps followed by an explanation of how each stage of the research process unfolded; the research setting and how I gained access to participants; and the process of data analysis. I conclude the chapter by presenting the strategies I engaged to ensure quality and ethical research.

To fully comprehend this chapter, reference to Figure 2.1 is necessary, whereby the research purpose, qualitative research design, philosophical assumptions and research paradigms chosen for this study were outlined, followed by an explanation of the research approach (GT), to empower the reader with a consciousness of how these elements of the research process fit together with the broader research objectives. From Figure 2.1 (chapter two), it becomes evident that research methodology and research methods are idiosyncratic concepts. A research methodology (already dealt with in section 2.6) is portrayed as a domain or a mapping plan, while a method refers to a set of steps followed to travel between two places on the map (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). Wahyuni (2012) defines methodology as a model to conduct research within the context of a specific paradigm. It relates to the underlying sets of beliefs (or research philosophy/ paradigm) that guide a researcher to choose one set of research methods over another. Sarantakos (2005) argues that methodologies are closer to research practice than the philosophical concepts found in paradigms. The research methodology can therefore be regarded as a conceptual framework that includes certain paradigmatic assumptions about research and sets out more pragmatic strategies, to operationalise the research. A research method, on the other hand, comprises of a set of specific procedures, tools and techniques applied to gather and analyse data, and to interpret research findings (Wahyuni, 2012). Sarantakos (2005)

depicts a research method as a-theoretical (implying that it is independent of methodologies and paradigms). It is for this reason that an interview can be used in different research paradigms and methodologies (Wahyuni, 2012). This chapter therefore focuses on the research methods and is presented in a way that accounts for the naturally evolving process of the research.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The research process is generally tailored to the specific research problem, including the sequential procedure followed by a researcher when conducting scientific research (Creswell, 2014; Tischler, 2010). Figure 3.1 below depicts the research procedure or process followed, from the time of the preliminary literature review to when ethical clearance was obtained, how participants were selected, how and when they were contacted, issues of informed consent and confidentiality, the data collection instrument, how data were analysed, and the continuation of the literature review, until the last step of the formulation of the substantive theory. This research process will be the focus of the below section.

The research process presents systematic processes of collecting, analysing and interpreting data, and accounts for the procedures that were followed to arrive at the theory of career development in HEIs in South Africa, which is presented in chapter seven of this report. The steps depicted in Figure 3.1 were followed to complete this study and constitute the structuring of this chapter in the sections following the description of the research setting below.

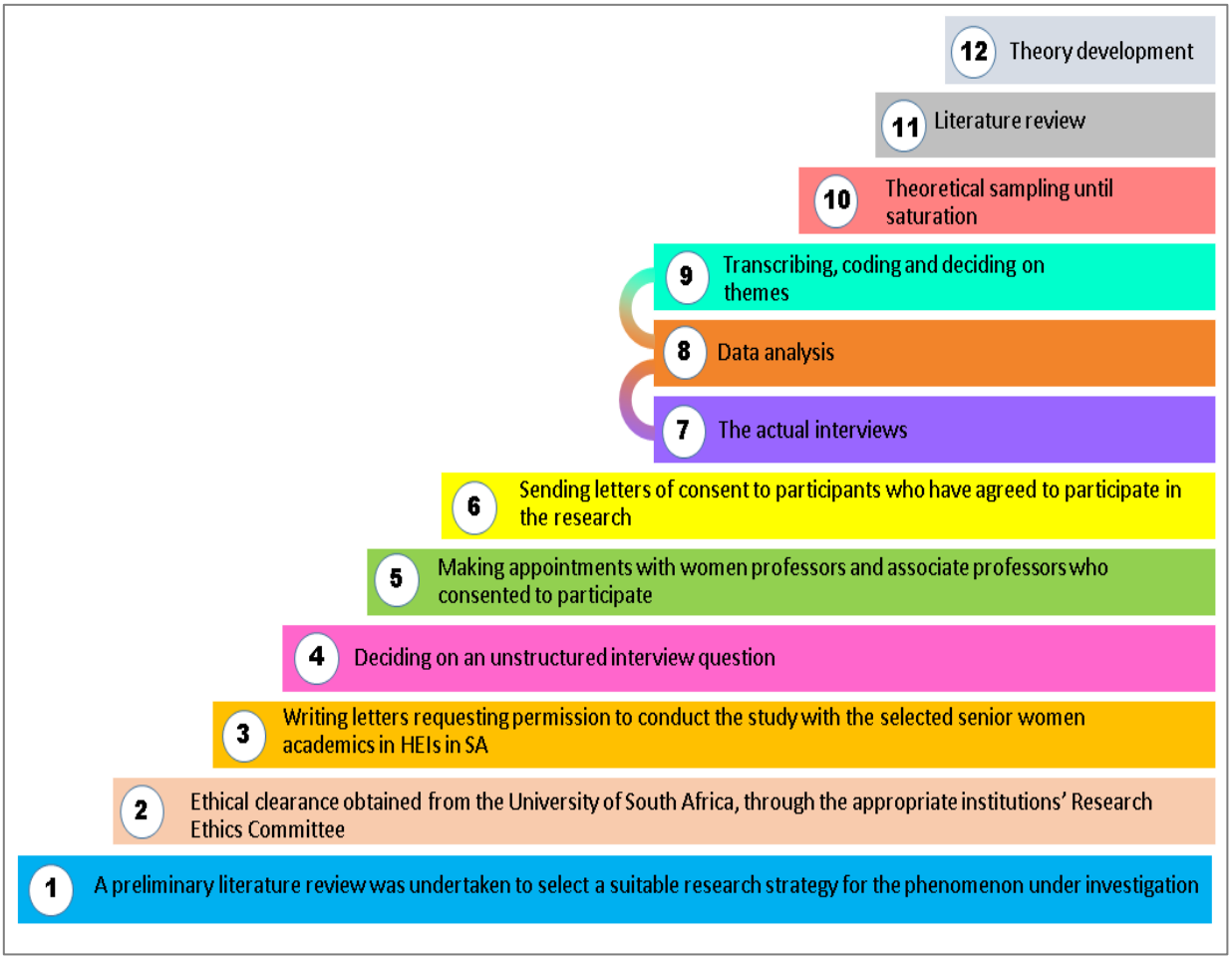

Figure 3.1: Steps in the research process

This research process started with me submitting the research proposal through the Department of IOP at Unisa. I submitted the final draft research proposal for a panel review by the research committee colloquium in November 2014, where my proposal was accepted, with minor changes. After making the necessary corrections to the proposal, I started applying for the ethical clearance certificate (Appendix A), which was issued in May 2015. As already explained, I did a preliminary literature review, and submitted the first draft of my research design and methodology chapters (chapters two and three) and literature review chapters (chapters four and five) prior to collecting data. This is consistent with the CGT guidelines on approaching theory through iterative reflection on data and theory. Data collection started in December 2016 and ended in March 2017. I performed face-to-face unstructured interviews, as the primary data collection technique, with the selected participants, who had to complete an informed consent form (Appendix B). I then allowed a process of

participants recommending other potential participants who met the selection criteria for participating in this research.

I commenced with data analysis after the first interview and allowed theoretical saturation to guide my continuing sampling decisions, thus data collection and data analysis were reiterative process as depicted in Figure 3.1. Theoretical saturation is the phase of qualitative data analysis in which the researcher has continued sampling and the analysis of data, until no new data appear and all concepts in the theory are well-developed (Glaser, 1978). Underlying theoretical saturation is the notion of theoretical sensitivity. The main assumption of theoretical sensitivity is that data analysis is data- driven (Glaser, 2002), that is, categories cannot emerge until they earn their way into the theoretical scheme. The principle in qualitative research is that you collect data until you reach saturation, hence data collection and analysis are iterative processes. The philosophy behind an iterative approach to research is that of flexibility and ongoing change that meets the needs of the research design, data requirements, and analysis methods, in response to new information as it is collected (Koch, 2004). *Iterative sampling* is an example of an iterative process. Working back and forth between the research design and the initial data collection, adjustments can be made to the purposive sampling frame, followed by further data collection with another cycle of evaluation against the sampling frame, and further sampling adjustment and data collection as needed (Koch, 2004). During this time, literature analysis also continued in tandem with the data analysis, to develop meaningful conceptual products. As my journey progressed, I revised the first drafts of all my chapters more than once, to retain congruence, as well as an authentic account of this inquiry.

3.3 RESEARCH SETTING

The context was aligned to my research aim, namely that of exploring and describing the career trajectories and experiences of senior women academics at HEIs in South Africa. The working context of HEIs was explained in detail in chapter one (section 1.2.3), and the working lives of senior women academics are dealt with thoroughly in chapter four of this thesis report. The participants' levels were associate professor and professor. In line with the qualitative nature of the study, it was appropriate to study

women professors' lives under natural conditions. The study involved exploring and describing each participant's context in detail, to understand their personal and social settings, as well as their specific HEI work setting and how these have impacted on their career trajectories. The contextual information of the participants is elaborated on in Table 3.1, where the biographical information of the selected women professors, which includes their age, race, marital status, years working in academia, and number and ages of their children, is presented. This biographical data formed a crucial part of the data collection and analysis processes, as the themes that emerged were compared in relation to the biographical differences between participants.

I recorded details about the context surrounding each participant's case, namely the physical environment, as well as the historical, economic and social factors that are likely to influence the experiences of these cases, and these details can be found in chapter five. By identifying the context of the participants, the researcher helps others to draw conclusions about the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other similar cases and participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

3.4 ENTRÉE AND ESTABLISHING RESEARCHER ROLES

Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that the participants and sites chosen for the study should decisively inform what it perceived to be the research problem and the fundamental phenomenon studied. I located the participants through contacts I had established previously with women professors from different institutions. For example, I have attended the African Doctoral Academy (ADA) winter and summer schools at Stellenbosch University several times, where I established relationships with some of the women professors present there, who come from various South African academic institutions. Furthermore, the ADA project coordinator was very helpful in introducing me to relevant senior women academics, after I had clarified the disposition of my study to her, and the sample of participants that I was looking for. The selected women professors also provided referrals using their networks. This referral process had a snowballing effect on the sampling process. The sampling strategies that were used are discussed in detail in section 3.5 below.

Saunders et al. (2019), postulated making the first contact, as the core encounter, however the moment that is done, further cases are identified from the population, who then link up the researcher with other potential participants, thus the sample snowballs, which was exactly what happened to me. Appointments were subsequently scheduled with consenting participants, at times and places fitting to them, which in most cases was their office. According to Glaser (1978), the primary step in gaining theoretical sensitivity is to enter the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible − especially logically deducted, prior hypotheses. Glaser (1978, pp. 2-3) posited that in this position, the researcher remains sensitive to the data, by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases. However, this is not consistent with Charmaz (2006, 2008), who postulated that a preliminary literature review is inevitably done prior to entering the research scene. Therefore, I entered the research scene with pre-conceived ideas of career development experiences of senior women academics. These ideas are reflected in the literature chapters of this thesis, and I used the process of reflexivity to try to ensure that my priori assumptions are transparent.

In social constructivist research, the researcher is the primary data collection and analysis instrument (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). I explained my role as the primary research instrument to each participant before the interview. Anney (2014) states that in qualitative research, the research instrument should be thoroughly described, as it enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings. I declared my preconceived assumptions and the values that I brought to the research scene to the participants, by explaining my background and what triggered my interest in the research, thereby doing self-reflection. I considered honesty as being crucial, as I wanted my participants to provide the rich information that I required from them.

3.5 SAMPLING STRATEGY

Qualitative research, and specifically grounded theory studies, is based on small samples or case studies that are selected purposively and theoretically (Patton, 2002). Qualitative researchers such as Koch (1994), Koch and Harrington (1998) have criticised the language of sampling as belonging to the positivist worldview, which still dominates terminology in the research arena. In qualitative research, data is collected

until data saturation is reached − in other words, until additional data collected provides little, if any, new information, or does not suggest new themes (Saunders et al., 2019). This does not tell us how many participants will be needed at the onset of a study, as theoretical saturation ultimately determines the number of participants. Saunders et al. (2019) presented some guidelines with regard to sample size, depending on the nature of the study to be conducted, and recommends a minimum sample size of between 20 and 35. Patton (2002) takes a middle ground and postulates that the sample size is dependent on the research questions and objectives − what the researcher wants to determine, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done within the available resources. Purposive samples are not considered to be statistically representative of the total population.

The sampling strategies adopted in this research were purposive sampling (Palys, 2008), snowball sampling and theoretical sampling, because I purposefully, as the name implies, selected the participants, as units of analysis, who were going to help in answering the research question, which is in line with Leedy and Ormrod (2014). With purposive sampling, the researcher uses his or her judgment to select cases that will best enable him or her to answer the research question(s) and meet the research objectives. Neuman (2005) and Saunders et al. (2012) refer to this as judgmental sampling, and Patton (2002) calls it critical case sampling. The benefit of using purposeful or critical case sampling is that participants can add rich, informative and valuable data to the study, based on their personal experiences of the phenomenon in question (Cutcliffe & Harder, 2012; Starks & Trinidad, 2007; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly (2006). It therefore automatically eliminates people who have not experienced the phenomenon, as this would not add value to the current research. Another strategy that was used in this research was snowballing – also known as chain referral sampling, which is considered a type of purposive sampling. In this method, participants or informants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate in or contribute to the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Snowball sampling was used when key participants referred me to other participants whose experiences were relevant to the study.

Furthermore, Patton (2002) defines theoretical sampling as the process of selecting incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people based on their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical constructs. It is an important component in the development of grounded theories. Grounded theory researchers commonly use theoretical sampling, which is also another form of purposive sampling. Strauss and Corbin (2008) refer to theoretical sampling as the process of sampling individuals who can contribute to building the open and axial coding of the theory. In a GT study, the researcher purposefully chooses participants who can contribute to the development of the theory, hence the process is called theoretical sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Creswell, 2013). As mentioned in chapter one, theoretical sampling is also relevant to the sampling of other data sources, such as literature (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). This requires that the researcher be theoretically sensitive (Glaser, 1978), which is a key concept in GT studies. Theoretical sensitivity is very effective when undertaking open coding (Glaser & Holton, 2004) and in understanding when theoretical saturation has been reached during the literature review and data collection. Therefore, data collection and analysis are reiterative processes in GT studies, to allow for a process of thinking about which data to further collect, in terms of what is missing, and to decide when to stop if nothing new emerges.

In summary, one can see that sampling decisions in this study were based on the evolving theoretical relevance of the information obtained, as well as the extent of theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Creswell (2013) purports that in GT, the researcher sometimes faces the challenge of determining when the categories are saturated, or when the theory is sufficiently detailed. Saturation was obtained through theoretical sampling in that I continued to sample whilst gathering data to ensure that I obtained the narratives and experiences from participants who adhered to the inclusion ciriteria, yet differed in terms of demographics such as race and age, physical location and specific HEI employment. The result was that a good variety of participants was obtained, and this ensured the development of several themes. Saturation was obtained when the data started to feed into and conceptualise the same themes in a recurring manner.

Saunders et al. (2019) also refer to another volunteer sampling technique, namely that of self-selection sampling. Self-selection sampling occurs when each case individually volunteers to partake in the research (Saunders et al., 2019). I also had professors who volunteered to participate upon hearing about the research from other participants.

Given the primary outcome of this study, namely a theory with the specific components of career development (the central phenomenon studied), causal conditions, strategies and conditions, and context and consequences, I opted to become flexible in my sampling strategy, and considered all the sampling techniques discussed here, adapting my decision as things unfolded in the research setting. I thus started with purposive sampling, combined with theoretical sampling, and added snowballing and discriminant case sampling. The research objectives were the most important factor in my decision making, to provide a career development framework for women academics that would be well informed by the key participants, and consequently well received.

In the present study, the homogeneity of the sample selected pertained to women who were at least on the levels of associate professorship and full professorship, and who had been within academia for at least five years. These selection criteria purposefully included participants who were likely to provide rich information about the research phenomenon, namely the career trajectory of women in HE. The sample was heterogeneous in terms of age, race, marital status, number of children, family background, fields of study, age, institutions where they work, etc., and whether they came from HBUs or historically white institutions (HWIs), or whether they came from traditional universities or comprehensive institutions.

3.6 PARTICIPANTS

I determined in advance which evidence to gather and which analysis techniques to use with the data, to answer the research question (Maree, 2007). Since this research was aimed at gaining insight into and an understanding of the dynamics of a career development framework/process for senior women academics, using one participant or participants from one institution would not have been appropriate. I ended up

interviewing thirteen participants from different HEIs, as depicted in Table 3.1 below. It was mostly their experiences that were analysed, and not so much their workplaces, although their different HE contexts had an impact on the patterns and trends that emerged from the findings. Associate professors and professors come from different HEIs in South Africa, with different historical, racial, marital and family backgrounds. As such, their career development trajectories are different, hence the variations in theory could be attributed to the differing contexts. In the results and discussion chapter (chapter six), I explain how different contextual factors have contributed to different experiences. The rationale for using multiple participants was to determine whether the findings could be replicated across cases. An important step in these replication procedures was the constant comparison of data pieces across different cases, and the development of a rich, theoretical framework (Yin, 2014).

The participants consisted of (4) white females, (7) black females, (1) Indian female, and (1) coloured female. Among the participants, 4 were never married, 4 were married, 4 were married, divorced and remarried, 1 was married and divorced, but never remarried, 8 had children and 3 had grandchildren, and 5 never had children. Twelve of the participants were of South African origin, with only one a non–South African.

Table 3.1: *A summary of the profile of the participants*

P no	Race	Age	Title	Position held	Field of study	Type of institution	Marital status and no. of children
1	Indian	48	Prof	Full-time student	Public Administration	Comprehensive	Married, no children
				Full-time student Part-time lecturer Lecturer Senior lecturer Associate Professor Professor Director of School			
2	White	62	Prof	Teacher	Education	Traditional	Married, divorced, remarried,
				Research assistant Deputy Director of the Research Unit Head of Research DVC Teaching and Learning at two institutions Now Professor in the Department			
3	White	59	Prof	Lecturer	Linguistics	Traditional	Single, no children
				Senior lecturer Ex- HoD Now Professor in the Department			
4	White	49	Prof	Lecturer	Maths	Traditional	Married a year ago, no children
				Senior lecturer Associate Professor HoD Vice Dean			
5	Black	48	AP	Accounting officer	Marketing	Comprehensive	Single, two children
				Junior lecturer Lecturer Senior lecturer Associate Professor Head of Department			
6	White	61	AP	Full time in theatre Technician	Theatre and performance	Traditional	Single, no children
				Lecturer Senior lecturer Now Associate Professor			
7	Coloured	50	AP	Teacher	Education	Traditional	Married, divorced, remarried recently, 1 child
				Junior lecturer Lecturer Senior lecturer Head of Department Director of School Deputy Exec Dean at another institution Now Vice Dean			
8	Black	67	Prof	Junior lecturer	African Languages	Traditional	Married, divorced, 3 children and 5 grandchildren
				Lecturer Senior lecturer Director of Unit Assistant Professor Postdoctoral fellow			

P no	Race	Age	Title	Position held	Field of study	Type of institution	Marital status and no. of children
9	Black	40	Prof	HR practitioner	Industrial Psychology	Comprehensive	Married, 2 children
				Lecturer Senior lecturer Head of Department			
10	Black	35-40	AP	Quality assurer in computer company	Operations Management	Comprehensive	Single, no children
				Waitress Full-time student Lecturer Senior lecturer Head of Department			
11	Black	50	Prof	Teacher	Maths and Science	Comprehensive	Married, divorced, remarried, 3 children
				Research assistant Lecturer Assistant Professor Research specialist Head of the Institute			
12	Black	61	AP	Secretary	Arts education	Comprehensive	Married, divorced, remarried, divorced, 3 children
				Assistant warden Teacher Lecturer Head of Department Executive Dean Senior lecturer Head of Department			
13	Black	60	Prof	Worked for various companies	Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS)	Comprehensive	Married, divorced, remarried, 3 children
				Worked for UN Deputy Director – Centre for Education Policy Development SA HSRC –IKS specialist Parliamentary Portfolio Committee-IKS Research Chair – IKS			

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

In line with qualitative studies, where the researcher is the main tool for data collection, I regard myself as the primary data collection instrument (Barnard, 2007; Durrheim, 2006; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 2004). Consistent with qualitative research requirements, the phenomenon to be studied was context-dependent. I therefore collected the data in a way that was suited to the natural environment in which the experiences occurred (Durrheim, 2006; Kelly, 2006), and used the unstructured interview to do so. This assisted in providing valid data, which was imperative to making accurate inferences about women academics' experiences (Durrheim, 2006).

Thirteen senior women academics from different HEIs in South Africa were ultimately interviewed. The hallmark of a good qualitative study is that it represents an in-depth

understanding of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Polit and Beck (2006) define an interview as a method of data collection in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another person (a participant). Interviews are conducted either face-to-face or by telephone. These interviews were conducted on a one-on-one, face-to-face basis with the selected participants, and were unstructured. Bryant (2009) and Mason (2004) define unstructured interviews as the opposite to structured interviews. Unstructured interviews are also called non-directive interviews. They are more like an everyday conversation, and they tend to be more informal, open-ended, flexible and free-flowing. Questions are not pre-determined, although there are usually certain topics that the researcher wishes to cover. This gives the interview some structure and direction. Unstructured interviews allow questions based on an interviewee's responses and proceed like a friendly, non-threatening conversation. However, because each interviewee is asked a different series of questions, this style can lack the reliability and precision of a structured interview. The major aim of unstructured interviews is to explore experiences, develop meaning, and gain a deeper understanding of experience and meaning (Hanson & Grimmer, 2007). The unstructured interview thus allows for in-depth probing of a case story and was the main method of collecting data for this study. As this study had an explorative nature, unstructured interviews, as a method with maximum explorative power (Schaefer, 2017), were chosen, also because of their flexible approach (Jamshed, 2014). Again, unstructured interviews offer an opportunity for participants to describe the phenomenon being studied in their own words, and to do so largely on their own conditions.

Preceding the interviews, I explained the protocols related to entry into the research setting to the participants via email. I introduced myself and the research objectives, explained how and why the participants were chosen for this research, and highlighted the importance of the research. Ground rules relating to my ethical conduct, confidentiality and respect for the views of the participants were thoroughly explained. The ethical issues involved were confidentiality, the right to participation, and sharing of experiences without fear of intimidation, as well as the fact that participants had a right to withdraw from the process at any time. An average interview lasted 1 hour, with the shortest being 45 minutes, and the longest being 2 hours and 30 minutes. The interviews were conducted at the participants' offices, which enabled me to collect

information by observing their surroundings. Neuman (2003) believes that people have a right to privacy, hence participants were given the right to decide what information they wanted to reveal or conceal.

The unstructured interviews allowed me to pose a primary life story question and allowed the participants to answer as they chose, with me probing every now and then, as the need arose. I allowed for spontaneous interaction with the participants, in order to obtain as much information as possible. Welman, Kruger, Mitchell and Huysamen (2005), Creswell (2013) and Saunders et al. (2019) all agree that unstructured interviews provide a greater wealth of information than other methods of data collection, because of their qualitative nature. I therefore regarded interviews as the most appropriate method for the context of the study, as they allowed women academics' voices to be heard through the telling of their own stories. The research question was posed, and I recorded the responses using a digital recorder and by taking notes, with the permission of participants. I did not adopt any specific approach for the individual interviews but used a conversational mode for every interview. The interviews, in return, lent themselves to some form of a relationship, with the quality of the relationship differing from one participant to another. The conversational mode also allowed participants to clarify my intentions in asking the question. The digital recorder was used to ensure accurate transcription of the participants' actual words and voices. Consistent with Bernard and Ryan (2010), a process known as transcription was used, whereby the audio-recorded responses of the participants were converted into text in a Word document. I transcribed the tape-recorded interviews with the assistance of a professional transcriber. I checked the transcribed responses against the tape-recordings for consistency, to ensure the integrity and credibility of the research data (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Schurink, Fouche & De Vos, 2012; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Data analysis already commenced during the data gathering phase but is discussed in a separate section below due to its importance to the methodological rigour of any inquiry.

Creswell (2013) highlights that conducting interviews can be taxing, especially for inexperienced researchers engaged in studies that require extensive interviewing, such as GT. I posed the following question to participants: "Tell me how your career journey as an academic started, up to the level where you are now". Phrasing the

question in such an open manner allowed the interview to focus on issues related to family background; social context; educational history; career development trajectory; professional experiences; and work-family integration. During the interviewing process, there were periods of silence and emotional outbursts, something for which I had to be prepared. As the researcher, I allowed the participant to express their emotions, by keeping quiet and calm. Where there were tears, I would offer tissues. I would relay to the participants that they are liberty not to go any further with the interview and that where they felt uncomfortable, they had the autonomy to decide not to answer questions that induced emotions that they were avoiding. I took notes and recorded those emotional moments, and they form part of my analysis. Careful preparation is therefore vital for successful interviewing. During my preparation, I envisaged such occurences, such that field notes became instrumental during the interview process, to record the interview as it progressed. I also kept a reflexive journal (see example in Figure 3.2) where I recorded my feelings about the research process, the data, and my experiences with participants, which enhanced my awareness of how I might have influenced the data and the research process, and how I was influenced by the research that I was doing. Consequently, I used probes to obtain detailed explanations of what the respondents mean when they say or do, and to assess whether the questions were clearly understood, and whether I understood the answers properly. As Bergman and Coxon (2005) stated, probes provide a formidable means of clarification and acquiring additional information, they may also present strong cues to interviewees, since they provide an opportunity to determine if the questions were well understood.

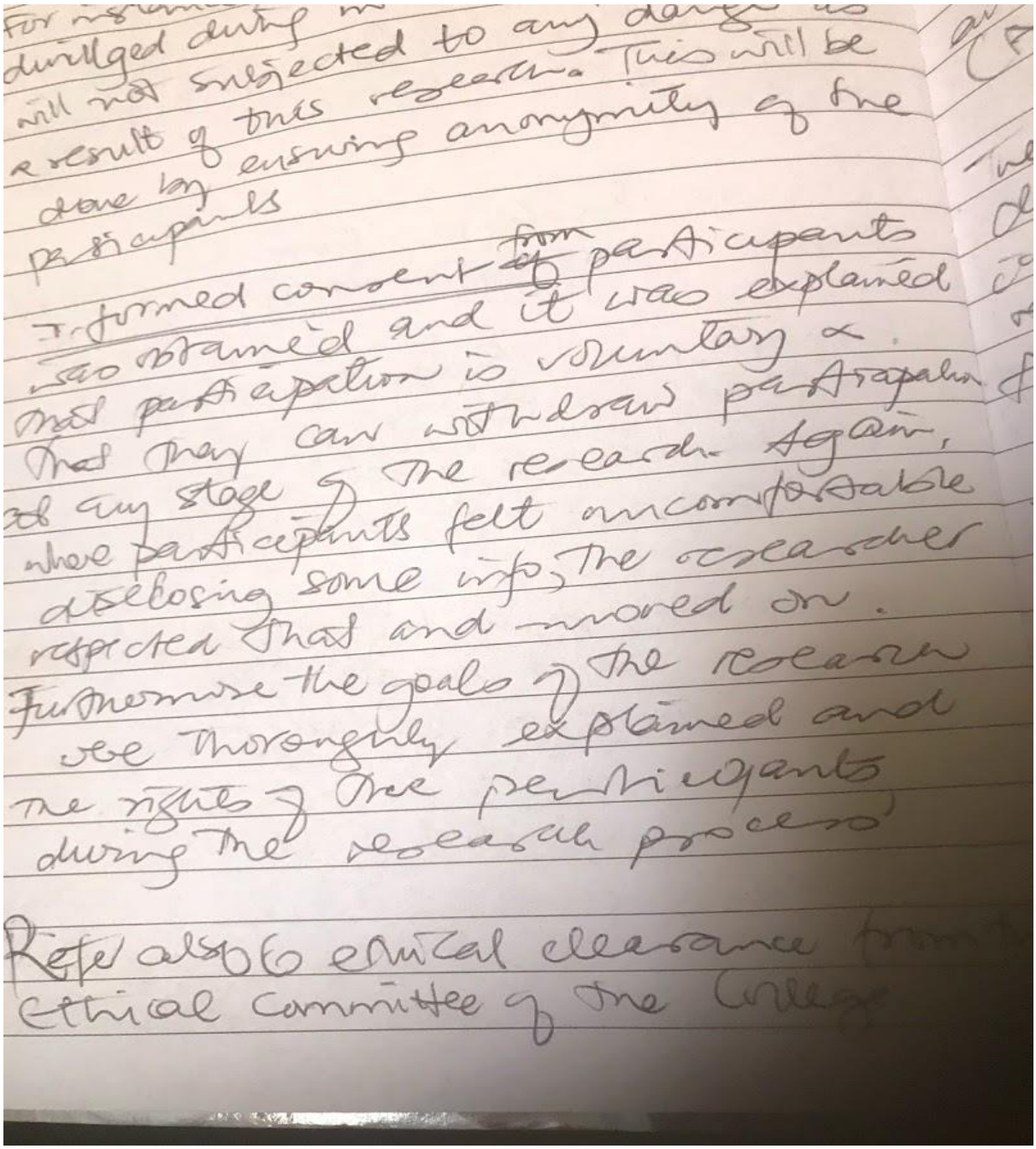

Figure 3.2: Reflexive journal excerpt

Yin (2011) states that many qualitative studies are based solely on a set of open-ended interviews. What makes the studies qualitative is that these researchers are interested in the interviewees' words and ideas, not in arranging the responses numerically (Yin, 2011). Managing the fieldwork in such an interview study involves recruiting participants and finding places to do the interviews. The desired locations were venues convenient to each participant, which turned out to be participants' offices.

Although telephone interviews could have offered potential advantages in terms of access, speed and cost, these were not chosen because they would not have allowed for personal contact with participants, which was crucial for this exploratory study. For the same reason, seeking to conduct qualitative interviews by telephone may have led to reduced reliability, where participants are less willing to engage in an exploratory discussion (Saunders et al., 2019).

In addition, data collection and data analysis were continually adjusted to the emerging findings. As a result, both data collection and data analysis had to be conducted in small cycles, instead of doing one and then the other.

3.8 RECORDING OF DATA

Valid data implies that the information obtained does in fact represent the meanings or experiences being studied, as they would occur in a natural setting in the real world (Durrheim, 2006; Kelly, 2006b). It therefore becomes crucial for interviews to be recorded, to ensure the rigor of the research findings. With the participants' consent, interviews were recorded using a digital recorder, and then transcribed by the researcher and safely stored in her office. To ensure confidentiality, the identities of the participants remained anonymous. Throughout the research process, I kept a reflexive journal (Ahern, 1999), where I recorded what had transpired throughout the research journey and the lessons that I had learnt, including things that went wrong. Furthermore, keeping a reflexive journal enabled me to record my own thoughts and any events that were not evident from the audio-recordings. Such events included interviews that did not take place when scheduled, the possibility of rescheduling being discussed with participants, and emotions expressed during the interview. I also recorded decisions such as when theoretical saturation was almost reached, or the need to interview more participants through discriminant sampling. To get the most value from the interviews, I immediately compiled a full record of each interview, field notes (Figure 3.3), and my reflexive journal (Figure 3.2). I verified the trustworthiness of the information with the interviewees through a member-checking process, in order to ensure that data was captured, understood and interpreted correctly.

I kept field notes of my own personal experiences, biases, predispositions and orientations, which might have prejudiced the recording and interpretation of the information, and I regularly referred to and reflected on these notes to lessen possible bias (Creswell, 2014). Making notes helped me to maintain concentration, formulate points to summarise for the interviewees to test my understanding, and to devise follow-up, probing questions (Saunders et al., 2019). I photographed excerpts from my field notes, which are depicted in Figure 3.3 below.

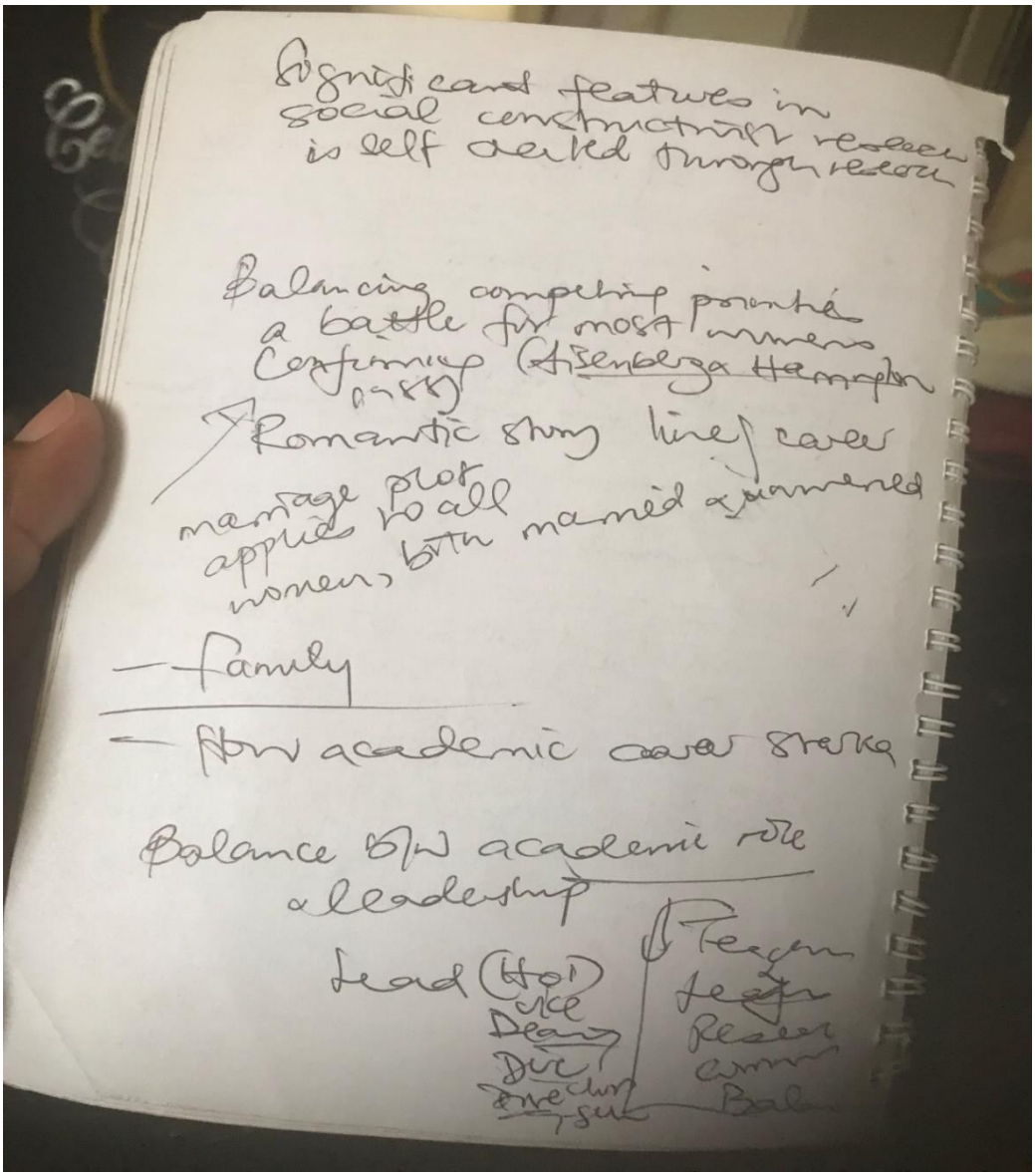

Figure 3.3: Example of field notes

3.9 REPORTING

The findings of the present research are presented and discussed in chapter six. The career development theory depicting the career development experiences of senior women academics working in South African HEIs are presented in chapter seven, after the results have been integrated with extant literature on selected career development theories and models. Once the report is final and approved, the findings will be shared with the participants first, as this formed part of the interview agreement. I will also share the findings with other women in academia on different platforms, namely conference proceedings, journal publications, and book chapters.

3.10 CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY DATA ANALYSIS

To be acknowledged as trustworthy, qualitative researchers must prove that data analysis has been conducted in a precise, consistent, and exhaustive fashion, through recording, systematising, and disclosing the methods of analysis in detail, to allow the reader to conclude whether the process is credible or not. Thorne (2000) characterises data analysis as the most complex phase of qualitative research, and one that receives the least thoughtful discussion in the literature. Data analysis conducted in a systematic manner can be transparently communicated to others (Malterud, 2001; Sandelowski, 1995). When conducting data analysis, the researcher turns into the instrument for analysis, making decisions about the coding, theming, decontextualisation and re-contextualisation of the data (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Each qualitative research approach has specific techniques for conducting, documenting, and evaluating data analysis processes, but it is the researcher's responsibility to guarantee rigor and trustworthiness.

In this research, data analysis started with the recording of the verbatim transcriptions of the recorded unstructured interviews, which were analysed in accordance with Charmaz's (2006, 2008) CGT analysis technique. Charmaz's constructivist "interpretation" of GT reconfigured many of its instructions and assumptions (Charmaz, 2006, p. 11). In particular, she rejected Glaser's underlying philosophy of discovering an implicit theory. She proposed that "neither the data nor the theories are discovered" and insisted that "we *construct* our grounded theories through our past and present

involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 10). Charmaz also diverged from the "methodological rules, recipes, and requirements" of Strauss' highly systematic coding process, perceiving it to be overly prescriptive (Charmaz, 2006, p. 9). Instead, she proposed flexible "guidelines" by having three stages of coding instead of the four stages of Glaser (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), which would "raise questions and outline strategies to indicate possible routes to take" (Charmaz, 2006, p. xi). Thus, she departed significantly from both Classic and Straussian GT, resisting both Glaser's underlined philosophy and Strauss' prescribed coding process. It is worth noting, however, that constructivist grounded theorists continue to embrace several of the original innovative methodological techniques (including theoretical sampling, saturation, constant comparison, and memo writing), which originated from the work of Glaser and Strauss (1967) (Kenny & Fourie, 2014).

Constructivist grounded theory has epistemological roots in social constructionism, assumes relativity, acknowledges different standpoints, and advocates reflexivity (Charmaz, 2008). It assumes the existence of the real world, which can be interpreted in multiple ways. Again, it assumes that worlds are constructed under historical and social conditions, which shape people's views and actions. These were underlying principles during the data analysis in this study. Since the purpose of this research was to construct a new theory using GT theory, it was necessary to be as open as possible to what is happening in the data, and to start the inductive inquiry from that point (Charmaz, 2011).

Figure 3.4 below draws a comparison between Charmaz's (2006; 2008) analytical coding strategy and that of Strauss and Corbin (1998). Charmaz (2006, 2008, 2011) recommended a coding procedure with three stages; initial (open) coding; refocused coding; and grounded theory (also referred to as theoretical coding). This differs from Strauss and Corbin (1998), who proposed four coding stages, namely: open coding; axial coding; selective coding; and the grounded theory.

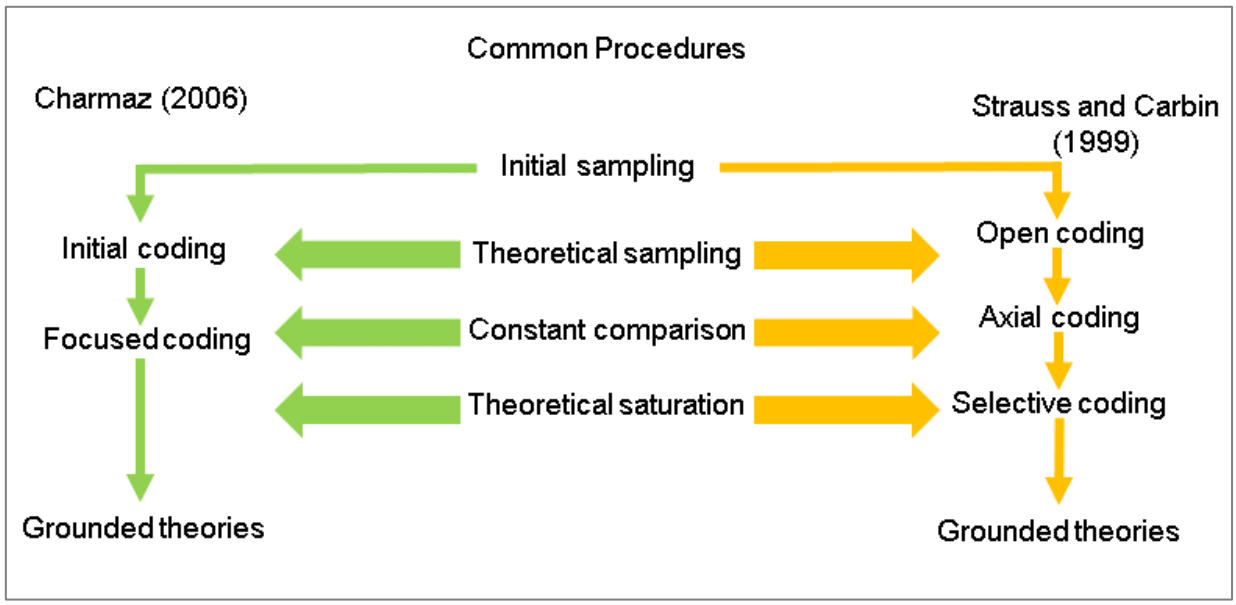

Figure 3.4: Comparison of Charmaz and Strauss and Corbin's coding procedures

Below is a discussion of the CGT coding phases that I applied in this study.

3.10.1 Open coding stage

For this research, initial or open coding was done by circling, highlighting, bolding, underlining or colouring rich or significant quotes or passages, which were referred to as "codeable experiences" worthy of my attention. I also used post-it notes to keep track of codes, as illustrated in Figure 3.3 below. These pieces of information became evidence to support propositions, assertions or theory, and serve as illustrative examples throughout this research report. Open coding provides the researcher with the full range of theoretical sensitivity, as it allows her to take chances in trying to generate codes that may fit and work (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Thus, I used theoretical sampling or theoretical sensitivity from the beginning of the coding process. During the open coding phase, I took the interview transcriptions line by line, and labelled them in relation to the stated research objectives. I asked two relevant questions, namely *what is the chief concern of all the participants, and how do they resolve it*? I found these two questions very important in guiding my analysis, because of the enormity of the data, and the need to streamline what explanations were pertinent to answering the research questions. I also had to think ahead about how data was going to be presented and analysed, therefore there was a need to structure the data. Consistent

with Maxwell and Mittapalli (2010) who stated that in order to ensure validity in qualitative studies, the researcher needs to ask him- or herself questions such as what the plausible alternative explanations and interpretations are, and how he or she intends to deal with them.

The line-by-line analysis is typical of open coding in classical GT (Corbin & Strauss, 1990), and resulted in a list of 320 codes in total. As part of the open coding phase, codes were reviewed, compared and categorised according to similarities and overlaps in meaning, as well as their relevance to the research objectives.

Coding took place by constantly comparing current transcripts with previous ones, in order to allow the emergence of categories and their properties, as shown in Figure 3.5 below. As the coding proceeded, additional categories emerged, which had not initially been considered. As coding is a cyclical process, the first cycle of coding data was not perfect. It was the second, third, and possibly fourth attempt at re-coding that further managed, filtered, highlighted, and focused the salient features of the qualitative data record for generating categories, themes and concepts, grasping meaning, and/or building theory, in line with Saldana (2016).

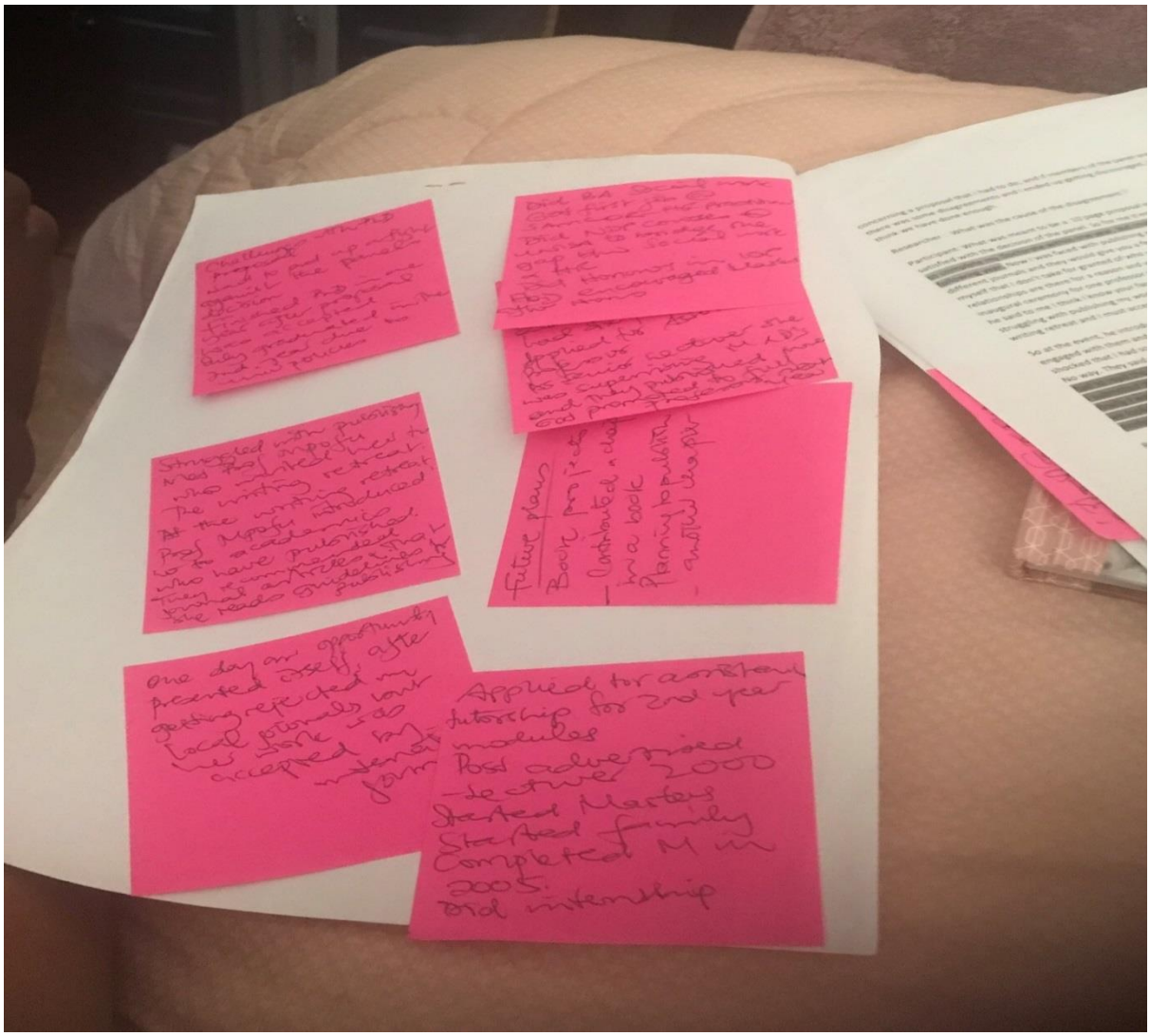

Figure 3.5: Example of open coding

Codes identitied during this initial open coding phase where numerous and included the following:

I am determined to succeed
I overcome obstacles
Where I started working influenced my choice of career
I have always known what I wanted to be
I am always ahead of my game
I grab opportunities
I had interruptions in my career
I married early and focused on raising children
If I put my mind to something, I finish it
I have always had a passion for education
I put work at the centre of my life
I get satisfaction from work
I have made sacrifices and compromises
Time management
Career planning
Hungry for knowledge
I have always taken my studies seriously
Despite interferences
Enrolled for PhD
Family
Work-family balance
Nobody believed in me
I believed in myself
Overseas study
Networking
Overcoming obstacles
Study opportunities
Negotiating with children
Marriage
Divorce
Remarriage

Children
Hard work
Discipline
I loved research
Supportive organizational culture
Antagonistic organizational culture
Consistency
Mentors
Supportive husband
Lack of family support
Growth
International exposure
I started my career later in life
I was not an academic when I started working
I made choices and sacrifices in order to achieve my goal
Academia is a very fulfilling and enriching experience
I started as a teacher
I have a meeting in an hour's time
Leadership role
Balancing leadership and academic roles
I enjoy research
My supervisor encouraged me to do PhD after masters
There was this professor who was my lecturer – I wanted to be like him
My first job was in industry
My first job was in government
I grew up in a rural area
It was a race issue more than a gender issue
I have lots of supervisor experience
My boss was very supportive
I work during weekends
I am single with no children
I am married with no children
I am single with children
I am married with children

I am in my second marriage
I am in my third marriage
I am divorced, and never remarried
I don't have a spouse
I sacrificed my social life
I don't plan to have children

The number of open codes resulting from the initial open coding phase is clearly difficult to manage, needing a refocused analysis to delimit the number of codes by comparing codes and their meanings. This naturally leads into the next coding stage.

3.10.2 Refocused coding stage

The next stage of refocused coding involved coding contrasting data by making constant comparisons. When working with multiple participants in a study, it is useful to code one participant's data first, and then proceed to the next participant's data. Therefore, I coded one woman academic's transcript, followed by another woman academic's transcript. I identified codes that were recurring or particularly significant in illuminating the career development experiences of senior women academics and ended up with 59 codes from grouping recurring codes. I elevated these codes to provisional theoretical categories that subsequently had to undergo selective or focused coding through the GT techniques of theoretical sampling, theoretical saturation, and memo writing (Charmaz, 2008). Memo writing, as illustrated in Figure 3.8, is vital to the process of constructing a theory. Through the medium of memo-writing, I scrutinised codes and categories, highlighted determining conditions, and traced progression and consequences (Charmaz, 2008). The memos may also document "gaps in the data" and help develop conceptual "conjectures" (Charmaz, 2008, p. 166). Thus, writing and sorting memos captures the unfolding process of interpreting the phenomena and constructing a theory.

Although Charmaz's reconfiguration of GT was strongly criticised by Glaser because he opposed the constructivist emphasis on descriptive capture, asserting that it "denies and blocks" the "true conceptual nature" of GT (Glaser, 2002, in Kenny & Fourie, 2015), I still believed that it was an appropriate choice for this research. Glaser argued that

the unequivocal objective of GT is conceptualisation, rather than a faithful description of participants' experiences (Glaser, 2002). Due to Charmaz's emphasis on the latter, Glaser asserted that Charmaz is "misled" in considering her methodology to be a GT, as a more accurate classification would be qualitative data analysis (Glaser, 2002).

Lastly, and more importantly, coding was also done collaboratively (Erickson & Stull, 1998; Guest & Macqueen, 2008), by engaging the services of an independent co-coder to verify and authenticate the findings, and to address possible researcher bias. The reasoning behind this was that multiple minds could bring a richer sense of understanding to the research findings.

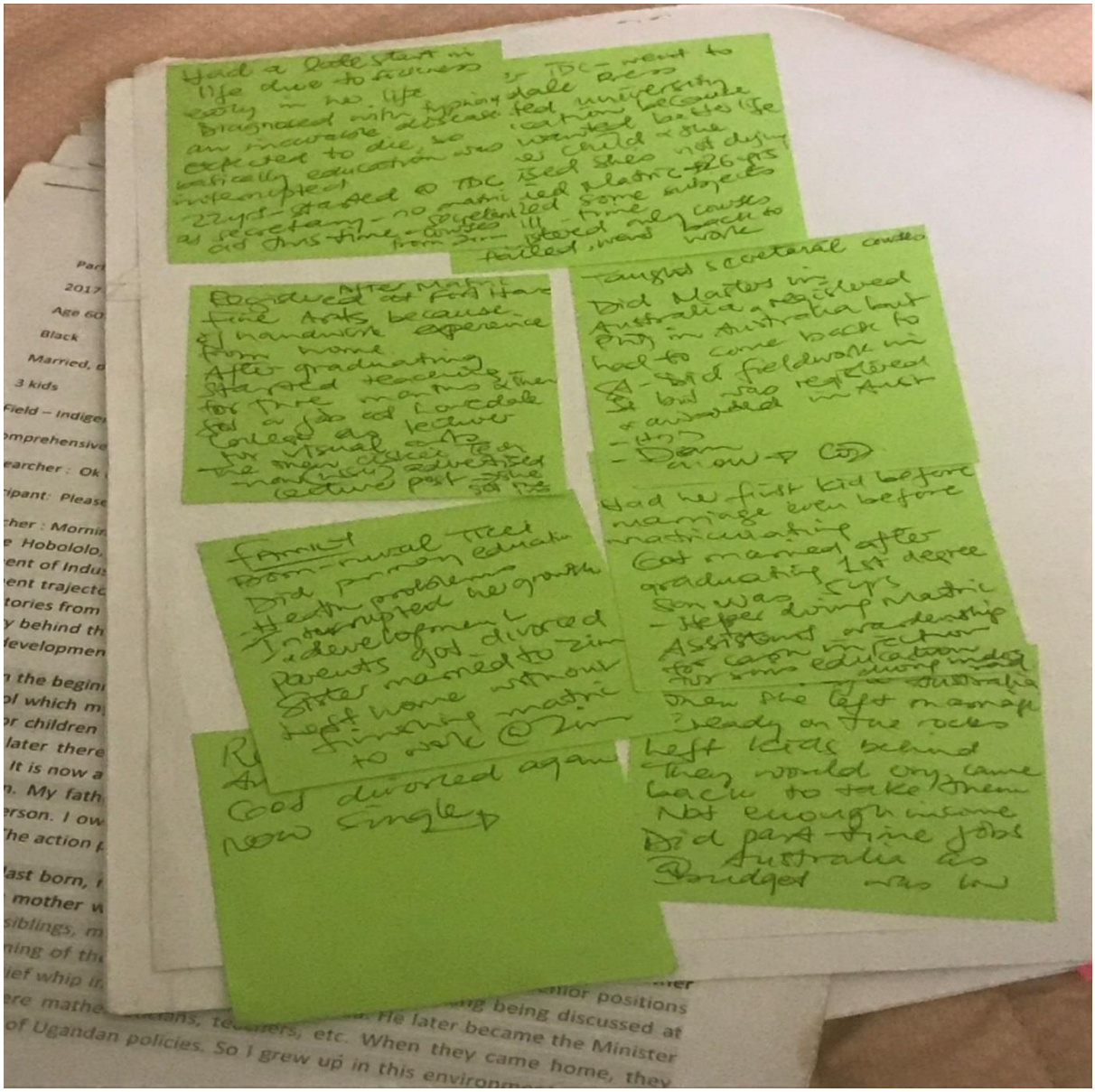

Figure 3.6: Example 1: Refocused coding

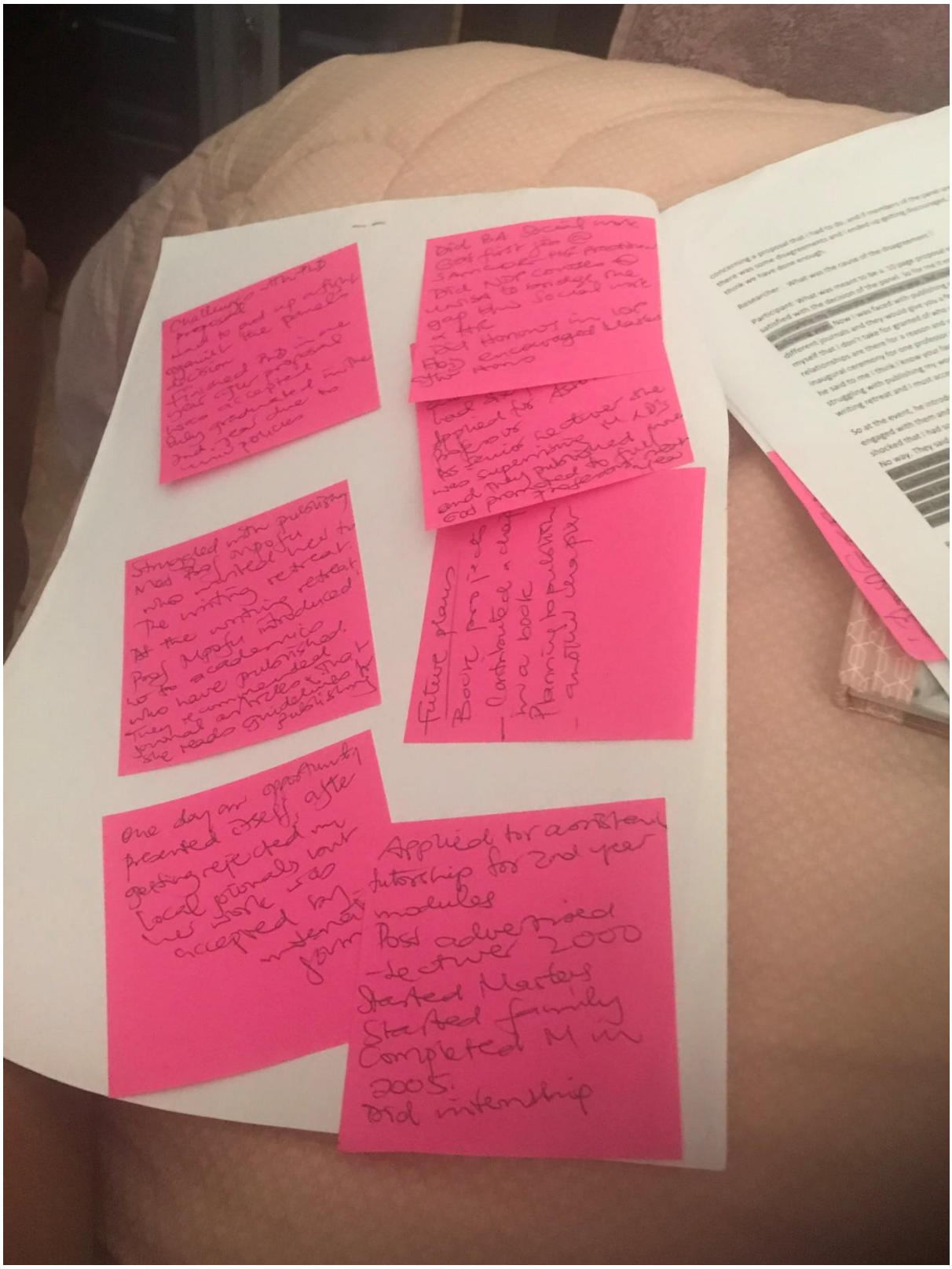

Figure 3.7: Example 2: Refocused coding

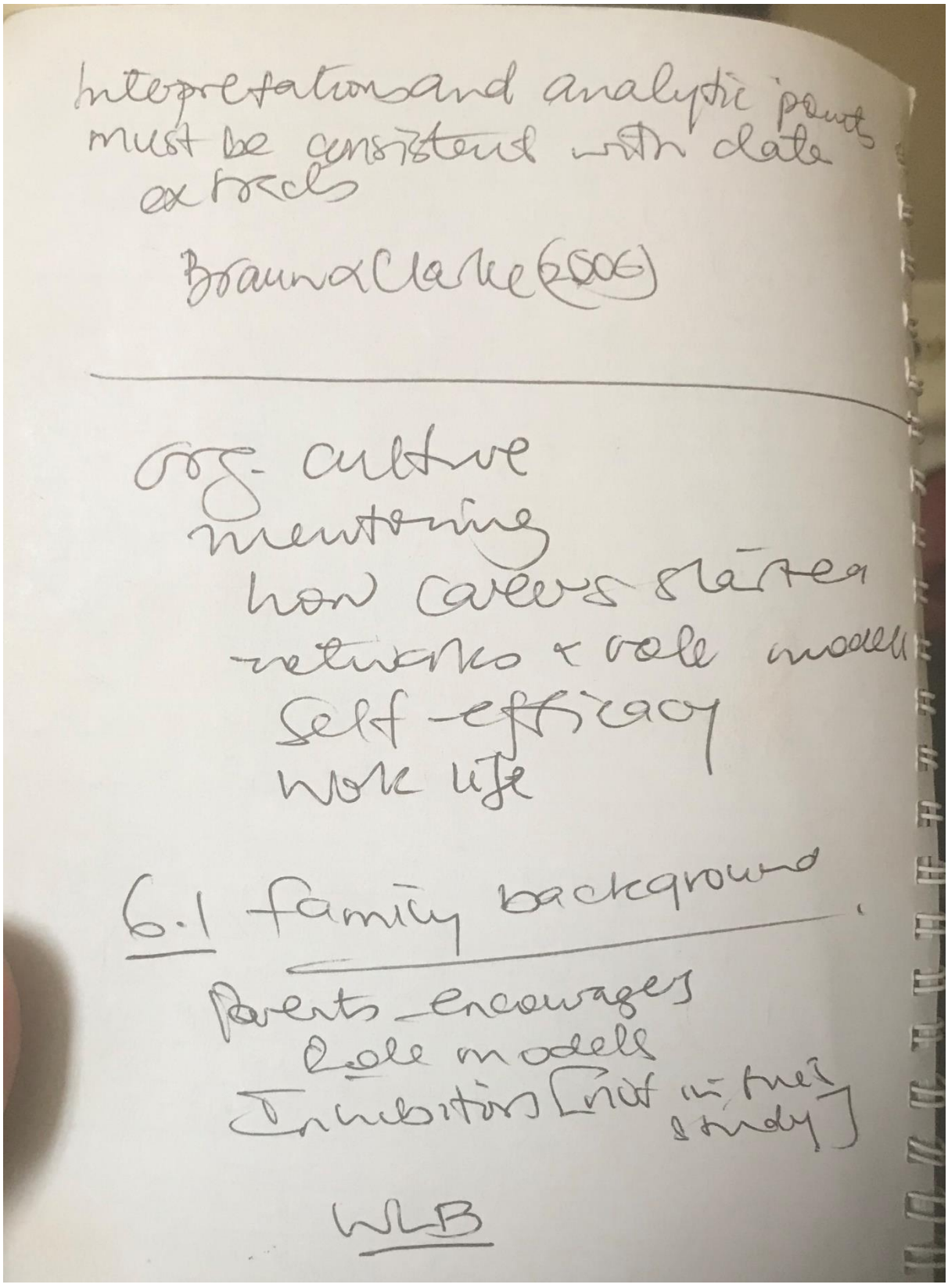

Figure 3.8: Memoing

3.10.3 Theoretical coding stage

The last stage of coding was where I, as the researcher, began to see the kind of categories that can handle the data theoretically, ensuring that the emergent theory fits and works. The ability to generate concepts from data and to relate them according to normal models of theory in general and theory development in particular is the essence of theoretical sensitivity (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Generating a theory from data means that most hypotheses and concepts not only come from the data but are systematically worked out in relation to the data during the research (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Theory can be defined as a system of statements that are logically linked together to explain and understand phenomena (De Vos, Schulze & Patel, 2005; Thornberg, 2012).

Grounded theory comprises coding data from the beginning of its collection, using comparative methods for identifying conceptual categories and their properties, writing memos, and conducting theoretical sampling as the conceptual categories are enriched through integration to make them robust in developing theory (Charmaz, 2009, 2012; Hughes & Jones, 2003). The importance of theory in qualitative research cannot be underestimated. It consists of "plausible interaction and relationships proposed among categories and sets of categories with changes of conditions either internal or external to the process itself" (Strauss & Corbin, 1994, p. 274).

I started making connections between categories, as well as using the constructivist-coding paradigm. This resulted in the clustering of categories to conceptually develop these categories, where a category was conceptualised by its various sub-categories, as depicted in Table 3.2 below. A CGT study typically concludes with the researcher's interpretative understanding of the studied social process, which is presented in the form of a "story" (Hallberg, 2006). Constructivist grounded theorists argue that this narrative approach to GT does not neglect abstraction, as it weaves conceptualisation into description (Charmaz, 2006; Hallberg, 2006), particularly as the concluding story encompasses "categories, conditions, conceptual relationships, and consequences" (Hallberg, 2006, p. 147).

This theory might be viewed as a substantive, low-level theory, rather than as an abstract, grand theory (Creswell, 2013). According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), it is not unusual for novice researchers to have difficulty in arriving at a core category, and this was also my experience. Corbin and Strauss (2015) define a core category as an abstract concept that is broad enough to be representative of all participants in the study, which is discussed in detail in the section below. Table 3.2 presents the categories that were constructed as the analysis unfolded. Each of the categories, together with their sub-categories, are presented below. Excerpts from the participants' transcripts will be detailed in chapter five (the results chapter) to illustrate how the categories were constructed from the data.

Table 3.2*: A presentation of categories that were constructed in this research*

Category	Sub category
1. Family background	1.1 Encouragement from family. 1.2 First generation graduates. 1.3 Parents' occupational interest. 1.4 Siblings' influence.
2. Foundation of career journey and how it led to academia	2.1 Where they started working. 2.1.1 Started working in academia. 2.1.2 Joined academia later. 2.1.3 Started working in industry. 2.1.4 Started working in government. 2.1.5 Started by pursuing a teaching qualification. 2.1.6 Started as a teacher in high school. 2.2 Obtained Masters qualification before first job. 2.3 Registered for PhD immediately after Masters. 2.4 Did not register for PhD immediately after Masters. 2.5 International exposure. 2.6 Post-doctoral fellowships.
3. Challenges to success in academia	3.1 Using challenges as stepping stones to success. 3.2 Challenges in being promoted to the next level. 3.3 Challenges of being a woman in academia. 3.4 Challenges of balancing competing priorities between family and work. 3.5 Challenges of balancing researcher and leadership roles.
4. Role players	4.1 Unintentional and intentional role players. 4.2 Mentors. 4.3 Networks. 4.4 Leadership support. 4.5 Supervisors. 4.6 Organisational culture. 4.7 Organisational policies.
5. Work – Life Balance	5.1 Work centrality. 5.2 Putting structures and systems in place for work-life balance. 5.3 Balanced lifestyle.
6. Support Systems	6.1 Organisational support. 6.2 Family support. 6.3 Networks

3.10.4 Core category

Charmaz (2006) stated that a social constructivist approach does not adhere to the positivist notions of variable analysis or finding a single basic process or core category in the studied phenomenon. Instead, the constructivist view assumes an obdurate, yet ever-changing world, but recognises diverse local worlds and multiple realities and addresses how people's actions affect their local and larger worlds. Thus, those who

take a social constructivist approach aim to show the complexities of specific worldviews and actions (Charmaz, 2006, p. 132).

Birks and Mills (2015), on the one hand, stated that according to Glaser (1978), Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), the central idea in GT was to identify a core category that encapsulated the process apparent in the categories and sub-categories that were constructed. Charmaz (2014) and Clarke (2005), on the other hand, rejected the importance of a core category in CGT studies, and took a more flexible approach than their predecessor, who developed classical grounded theory. Therefore, as this study is aligned with CGT, I followed Charmaz's views regarding a core category, and as a result I did not construct a core category. Chapter six, however, the results chapter highlights all the categories and sub- categories that this research came up with, and the interaction between these categories.

3.11 ENSURING QUALITY AND ETHICAL RESEARCH

Qualitative research is repeatedly critiqued for missing scientific rigor. The most commonly heard criticism is that qualitative research is merely a mixture of anecdotes and personal impressions that have been strongly subjected to researcher bias (Mays, 1995). Furthermore, it is argued that qualitative research lacks reproducibility. This is enabled by the research being personal to the researcher that it poses a risk that there is no guarantee that a different researcher would not come to radically different conclusions (Carminati, 2018). Lastly, qualitative research is criticised for lacking generalisability (Carminati, 2018; Mays, 1995). This is due to qualitative methods generating large amounts of detailed information about a small number of settings. The main supposition triggering all these criticisms is that quantitative and qualitative approaches are fundamentally different in their ability to ensure the validity and reliability of their findings.

Validity checks are used as evidence to justify research findings, so that the scientific community can accept the findings (Kerlinger, 1966). Since constructivists are looking for subjective reality and believe in multiple realities to explain a phenomenon, the frequency of responses should not be the major indicator of the experience (Lacity & Janson, 2001).

When doing coding, qualitative researchers seek patterns as stable indicators of people's way of living and working (Saldana, 2016). However, Alvesson and Karreman (2011) cautioned against the narrow focus on codification for patterns, as this can oversimplify the analytic process and hamper rich theory development. This is in line with Lacity and Janson (2001), who asserted that social constructivist methodologies are not pliable to quantification. Therefore, quantitative validity checks based on incidences or percentages are viewed as misleading in social constructivist research, as social constructivists discard the view that rate of recurrence is an indication of importance. According to Lacity and Janson (2001), authors may disregard fundamental experiences that are considered delicate and reiterate commonplaces that they believe are safe, they may subconsciously ignore crucial events, or they may ignore important viewpoints that they assume the readers already comprehend. Alvesson and Karreman (2011) compounded that incoherencies, absurdities, obscurities, processes, and the like are certainly key aspects of social reality and are therefore merit discovering.

Saldana (2016) suggested that when working with multiple participants in a study, it helps to code one participant's data first, and then progress to the second participant's data. The researcher might find that the second data set will influence and affect the recoding of the first participant's data, and the consequent coding of the remaining participants' data. A similar process may be appropriate for a coding system applied to an interview transcript first, then to a day's field notes, and then to a document. Bazeley (2007, p. 61) recommends that the second document that is coded should contrast "in some important way with the first ... to maximize the potential for variety in concepts (or in their forms of expression) early in the process".

Therefore, in terms of the above explanation, quoting the frequency of times a particular response was given will be leaning more towards positivist approaches, where frequency is an indication of importance by reporting quantity, which is against the principles of social constructivism. In the sections below, I start by discussing strategies that I employed to ensure quality in terms of rigour and trustworthiness – aspects more relevant to a constructivist research inquiry. Secondly, I will present the measures that I took to ensure an ethical inquiry.

3.11.1 Strategies employed to ensure quality data

Several strategies are available within quantitative research to protect against bias and enhance the reliability of findings. Since the traditional concepts of reliability and validity do not fit perfectly into the qualitative research landscape, researchers who are operating within non-traditional research paradigms (non-positivist and non-post positivist) are alleged to be pushing the boundaries of the established tradition or doxa (Loh, 2013). According to Bourdieu (1990, p. 20), doxa refers to "the coincidence of the objective structures and the internalized structures which provides the illusion of immediate understanding, characteristic of practical experience of the familiar universe, and which at the same time excludes from that experience an inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility". In this context, doxa refers to the acceptable way of doing things, or a way of understanding (Loh, 2013).

According to Guba and Lincoln (1985), the quality of qualitative data should be assessed through the trustworthiness criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. These criteria replace the positivist terms of validity, reliability and generalisability (Loh, 2013). In this regard, Beck (1993) identifies credibility, auditability and fittingness as the main standards for rigor in qualitative research studies. Cooney (2011) used Beck's (1993) criteria, although he did so using a Straussian GT study. Some social scientists (Bryman, 2012; Kalof, Dan & Dietz, 2008) explained that reliability and validity cannot be practically used as criteria to assess qualitative research. Cooney (2011) added that peer validation and triangulation can be used as other methods to assess the trustworthiness of the findings. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). The four criteria of research trustworthiness developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) have been widely cited in the social science research methodology literature (Bryman, 2012; Kalof et al., 2008) as a means to evaluate the quality of qualitative research, and include the following:

- *Credibility,* which parallels internal validity;
- *Transferability,* which resembles external validity;
- *Dependability,* which parallels reliability; and
- *Confirmability,* which resembles objectivity.

These criteria are aligned to the constructivist paradigm, in that all knowledge is constructed, and therefore, constructed knowledge is never perfect (Loh, 2013). I will therefore structure this discussion according to these criteria.

3.11.1.1 Credibility

Credibility deals with the accuracy of data in reflecting the observed social phenomena (Cooney, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013). Put simply, credibility is concerned with whether the study actually measures or tests what was intended. The careful selection of participants was considered to be the first practical step towards ensuring the credibility of findings in this study (Yin, 2014). It has already been explained which sampling strategies were used to ensure that the right participants were selected, in order to meet the set research objectives (see section 1.5 in chapter one). The final report was taken back to the participants to offer them an opportunity to provide context and confirm interpretation. This process is called member checking (Birt et al., 2016; Patton, 2002), and it addresses the accuracy of the data. Cooney (2011) concludes, from a review of the literature, that both process and product should be considered when assessing the credibility of a GT study.

Other approaches used to ensure credibility are *data triangulation, method triangulation* and *evaluator triangulation,* which help to enhance the credibility of research findings (Beck, 1993; Cooney, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Loh, 2013). Evaluator triangulation, which is also known as peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), is not only useful in the data analysis stage to check the consistency of data coding, but also in identifying other perspectives on projects which may have been overlooked by the researcher. The services of an independent coder, who signed a confidentiality agreement, were employed to check for consistency in the coding process, and to bring in a fresh perspective, as the independent coder is from another field of study. Peer validation is crucial, since participants could be viewing the experience from a common-sense understanding. Therefore, validation by scholars familiar with the phenomenon under investigation might assist with the analysis process (Loh, 2013). This is where the role of the supervisor comes in, where scholars familiar with the matter under investigation help to validate the quality of the findings.

3.11.1.2 Transferability

Transferability (Beck, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) refers to the level of applicability to other settings or situations. Cooney (2011) calls this fittingness, as it is concerned with demonstrating that findings have the same meaning to others in similar situations. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), a rich and thick explanation of research cases should be provided to enhance transferability. While it is certain that the data from a qualitative study is not reproducible, it is not impossible to apply a qualitative study in a different setting. With some careful adjustments in the setting, for example, interviewing women professors from different institutions, the research findings from the current study can be transferred to a different study of other HEis in South Africa, and across countries in Africa and globally. In this research, transferability was ensured through discriminant sampling, as explained earlier in this chapter (see 3.5 above). Transferability was also ensured by detailed contextual descriptions of the research context and the participants, so that the reader knows what context the results can be transferred to.

3.11.1.3 Dependability

Dependability corresponds to the notion of reliability, which promotes replicability or repeatability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability involves considering all the changes that occur in a setting, and how these affect the way in which research is conducted. In the present study, dependability was achieved through a detailed explanation of the research design and process, to enable future researchers to follow a similar research framework. This was not necessarily intended for them to reproduce the same process, but to outline the process that led to the outcome of this research. Dependability was achieved by presenting a detailed and step-by-step explanation of the research processes that were undertaken, as well as providing information on how the researcher, as the primary data gathering instrument, was used to gather empirical data.

3.11.1.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which others can confirm the findings, to ensure that the results reflect the understandings and experiences of observed participants, rather than the researcher's own preferences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to triangulation methods, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 317) suggest using an "inquiry audit" to enhance confirmability.

In this study, data was documented, and a reflexive journal kept to track the progress of the research process. Memos and interim summaries formed part of the reflexive journal and research record. This research record served to provide an audit trail, which enabled an examination to be done of both the research process and research outputs, by tracing the course of the research. Peer assistance to cross-check the coding development and application can also help to enhance confirmability (Loh, 2013).

According to Creswell (2013), the researcher positions him or herself in a qualitative study. This implies that researchers convey (be it in the method section, introduction, or in other places in a study) their background (e.g. work experiences, cultural experiences, history) and how this informed their interpretation of information in the study, as well as what they gained from the study. Throughout this research process, I have positioned myself, but in chapters one and two respectively, I thoroughly explained my personal motivation to conduct this research and my scientific assumptions about research. Furthermore, the literature chapters (see chapters four and five) served as the lens through which I viewed the data and influenced my understanding of the data. Therefore, I did not approach the research scene without prior meta-theoretical assumptions and continued to develop and integrate these assumptions throughout the study.

3.11.2 Summary of strategies to ensure quality

In summary, the following strategies were used to ensure the quality and rigor of this constructivist research, consistent with the recommendations of various authors, such

as Balogun and Johnson (2004), Bryman and Bell (2007), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Mantere (2008), Merriam (2002), Plack (2016), and Robson (2002):

- Being transparent about individual biases, which may have affected the findings. For example, coding requires that one wears the researcher's analytical lens (Saldana, 2016). However, the way in which one perceives and interprets the data depends on the type of filter that covers the lens, and from which angle the researcher views the phenomenon. In my case, I was wearing the social constructivist and feminist lenses. I explained these lenses in chapter two and elaborated on the extant literature that influenced my thinking about the data in chapter five.
- Keeping a thorough record, showing all the methods employed for the analysis of data, and ensuring that the explanations of data are reliable and apparent. As already noted, records were kept of all interviews through audiotapes, notes and my reflexive journal. The reader can also refer to the audit trail which was established in this chapter – this gives a detailed presentation of all the methods that were employed
- Adding a significant volume of verbatim participant explanations to support the findings. In the ensuing chapter, verbatim participant responses are provided to substantiate the meaning that I constructed from the data.
- Requesting the participants to make remarks concerning the interview transcripts, to determine if the ultimate themes adequately represent their experiences. This was achieved through member checking with all participants regarding the interpretation of the data, as explained in section 3.11 above.
- Considering the nature of the subject under investigation, in order to select the right method for addressing research questions. For example, in this research, individual interviews were deemed more appropriate than for dealing with sensitive issues.
- An independent coder from a different field of study was used to audit and authenticate the findings.
- Using other knowledgeable peers in the research area to audit the research, such as the two supervisors assigned to the researcher.

Guba and Lincoln (1985) identified the types of evidence that researchers can offer to demonstrate validity: rich descriptions, triangulation of sources and methods, peer review, and participant review. This evidence is meant to support the researcher's interpretation of the text.

Furthermore, I assessed the quality of the data and the rigor of the process by ensuring that the generated findings are credible, transferable, dependable and conformable (Schurink et al., 2012). In this regard, the following was done:

- Credibility was ensured through member checking (Creswell, 2014; Rossmann & Rallis, 2011).
- Transferability of the study was ensured by providing detailed descriptions of both the research methodology that was followed, as well as the findings that were obtained (Babbie, 2010; Shah & Corley, 2006). Transferability was further enhanced by ensuring that all the in-depth interviews were conducted within the same period, in order to eliminate possible influences (Babbie, 2010).
- Dependability was ensured by being consistent in employing purposive sampling and applying the data collection and data analysis techniques (Shah & Corley, 2006).
- Confirmability was obtained through rigorous data management of the verbatim transcriptions, field notes taken of observations during the in-depth interviews, and accurate record-keeping (Rossman & Rallis, 2011; Shah & Corley, 2006).

3.11.3 Adhering to ethical principles

In addition to adhering to quality criteria, this research also had to conform to generally accepted ethical standards in research practice. Although researchers have the right to search for knowledge, they cannot do this at the expense of the rights of participants in the study (Mouton, 2007). Research ethics covers not only aspects pertaining to the privacy and anonymity of the participants, but also includes responsibilities towards the practice of scientific research and the participants in the research (Davis, 2012).

In terms of a researcher's responsibility towards the practice of science, several conventions exist. Amongst others, researchers should always strive to maintain objectivity and integrity (Shaw & Satalkar, 2018). Given the nature of the proposed research design, objectivity and integrity in qualitative studies is often a challenge, yet this is recognised as vitally important in scientific research. In fact, there is an argument that research integrity is synonymous with scientific integrity, while others regard research integrity as a part of the wider domain of scientific integrity (Shaw & Satalkar, 2018). Different quality criteria were applied, and strategies were employed to adhere to these criteria, as discussed in section 3.11 above. All these point to the definite attempts that were made during the current research to ensure quality research.

As plagiarism is an ethical issue (Spinak, 2013), all sources used were acknowledged, and the Turnitin software program was used to confirm an originality index for the thesis and check that any similarities are in line with acceptable standards. Furthermore, in line with good publication practices, the researcher will not submit identical copies of articles, based on this research study, to more than one publisher or journal at a time. Ethical and professional considerations have been adhered to, as per the College of Economic and Management Sciences' Research Innovation and Higher Degrees Committee (CEMS RIHDC) guidelines (2015) at UNISA. Prior to conducting the study, ethical clearance was granted by the CEMS RIHDC (see ethical clearance certificate in Appendix A). Only the researcher and the verifier, the independent coder, were preview to the confidentiality agreement entered between myself and the participants.

3.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In summary, this chapter has given an account of how I, as the researcher and primary data collection instrument, did self-reflection throughout the study. As already explained, reflexivity and disclosure enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings. Reflexivity refers to the way I declared my pre-conceived assumptions and knowledge when I entered the research arena (Ahern, 1999). It also entailed my reflections on the sampling decisions made throughout the research process, by asking myself questions such as how I impacted on the data, and how the data impacted on me, hence the reflexive journal.

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the research process followed to conduct this research, the research method (unstructured interviews) employed to collect data, the sampling strategy, and constructivist data analysis. The trustworthiness criteria, ethical considerations and reporting of the research findings were also discussed. In the ensuing chapter, studies on the career development of women in academia globally are reviewed, followed by barriers to the career development of women, and the factors responsible for the success of women, which will be discussed from a theoretical perspective based on previous studies.

CHAPTER FOUR
WOMEN IN ACADEMIA: AN INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African government has been undergoing transformation, as explained in section 1.2.1 of chapter one, trying to rid itself of past imbalances and reposition itself in the global economy. These reforms included redressing gender and racial inequalities in the HE sector, with the aim of closing inequitable gender gaps. Much has been said about gender statistics in postgraduate enrolments and graduations, shortage of women in senior academic positions in HEIs, and women's research outputs, which are fewer than those of their male counterparts (see section 1.2.2 of chapter one). Women academics' career development trajectories and the factors responsible for their career success, as well as the factors inhibiting their academic success and career growth, remain a cause for concern.

This chapter focuses on women in academia. Firstly, a historical overview is provided from a global perspective, and then briefly in the context of Africa. Thereafter, the discussion moves to the South African context. Secondly, the requirements for academic success are outlined, to obtain an understanding of what is required from women to succeed in HEIs. Thirdly, the inhibiting and enabling factors and environments influencing the academic success of women are examined. The discussion then focuses on the career trajectories of women in academia and the discourses that explain women in academia. The chapter ends with a personal reflection and concluding remarks. The reason for including a literature review chapter such as this is to give the reader an opportunity to understand factors responsible for the success of women in HE contexts, both globally and locally, as well as the challenges faced by women academics and how they have overcome such challenges, and to identify gaps in career research.

4.2 HISTORY AND BRIEF OVERVIEW OF WOMEN IN ACADEMIA

The issue of gender balance in senior academic positions is a global phenomenon that has gained traction in recent years. Shortage of women in senior positions is prevalent

in most sectors of the economy. Its historical roots are founded on what used to be called the place of a woman, which was in the kitchen, and the fact that women have always been known to be nurturers and caregivers.

Historically, women were discriminated against, even in HE, both in the attainment of higher degrees and in employment in academia, to the point that some women started believing the lie that academic success was unattainable, or that seniority in academia was reserved for men. Their self-efficacy to finish a degree and occupy a position in academia was low, and so was their motivation, due to the lack of role models in society (Hackett & Betz, 1983). In such a context, white male privilege was the filter through which the experiences of women were re-interpreted and dismissed (Clarke, 2010; Hull, Scott & Smith, 1982).

Women's limited presence in influential positions has often been attributed to the phenomenon of the *glass ceiling*. Even within the academic context, the slow upwards progression and stagnation of women academics towards the professoriate level has similarly been explained through a range of descriptions that capture the different challenges faced by women (Subbaye & Vithal, 2016), one of which is the glass ceiling. This term refers to the hindrances that preclude women's achievement of full professorship, which results in a paucity of women professors, thereby limiting women's progression to senior academic leadership and management positions in HEIs (Maimunah & Mariani, 2008; Morley, 2014; Smith, Caputi & Crittenden, 2012). Others refer to the barriers that prevent the ascension of women and keep them in the junior ranks as the *sticky flo*or (Smith, Caputi & Crittenden, 2012). The effect of both the glass ceiling and sticky floor is that over time, women who make little progression become discouraged, and some ultimately leave academia for other sectors, or even become homemakers. They are subsequently replaced by others, thereby creating a *revolving door syndrome* − a situation where the turnover of women academics is relatively high (Subbaye & Vithal, 2016).

To break the "glass ceiling" and remove the barriers that prevent women from utilising their potential, it is essential to understand these barriers and to identify career strategies used by other successful women to overcome barriers associated with balancing work and family responsibilities. Various theories related to the "glass

ceiling" phenomenon suggest that women are hindered from advancement to senior positions by several factors, including, but not limited to, societal, cultural, personal, legal and organisational factors (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010; Berkery, 2013). Joiner, Bartram and Garretta (2004) summarised these barriers as follows; culture, gender stereotypes, leadership and decision-making, work-family conflict, formal and informal networks, and mentoring. Section 4.6 of this chapter discusses the barriers to the career development of women in more detail.

Although the glass ceiling metaphor conveys a rigid, impenetrable barrier, barriers to women's advancement are now more permeable (Eagly & Carli, 2007), which makes this explanation less appropriate. Barriers have shifted, in that it is no longer the total exclusion of women that is an issue, but rather exclusion at higher levels, which suggests that research efforts should focus on the reasons for exclusion at this level. Another term that has been more recently suggested for these barriers is the "labyrinth", which symbolises the complex, exhausting challenges that women must navigate on their way to senior roles (Guerrero, 2011, p. 382).

Notwithstanding the improvements that women in academia have demonstrated over the past two decades globally, in terms of achieving postgraduate qualifications and pursuing academic careers, women academics are still lagging their male colleagues, especially at senior levels (CHE Report, 2017/8; DHET Report, 2017/8). Consequently, women academics' presence in these positions of power still evokes a sense of wonder, two decades after Eagly and Carli (2007) regarded this labyrinth phenomenon and women in power as unthinkable. The literature on women and career progression in HE has increased since the 1980s, and feminist writers and researchers have produced illuminating analyses of women's disadvantaged and marginalised position in academia (Clarke, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Gilligan, 2003; Guerrero, 2011; Hull, Scott & Smith, 1982). The paucity of women in the academic domain has encouraged scholars such as Eagly and Carli (2007), Gilligan (2003) and Guerrero (2011) to globally research its linkages to feminist theories. This substantial body of knowledge started a revolution, which focused its energy on making women's voices heard. This revolution has contributed extensively to feminist theories, highlighting gender imbalances and exclusions, such as the gender pay gap, difficulties with career progression, and conflict between work/life commitments.

Research on the career development of women in academia has been carried out in western countries (Raburu, 2015), such as Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, and the United States of America (USA) (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Armenti, 2004; Bagilhole, 1993; Blackmore, 1999; Morley, 2000; White, 2004). In all these studies, one common theme emerged: women are in the minority in senior academic positions, compared to their male counterparts. Compiling exact comparisons across countries, however, remains a complex task because of each country's unique circumstances (Aiston & Jung, 2015). One of the differences cited by De la Rey (1999) was the variation in staff categories and definitions of these categories. In some countries, the professoriate category, for example, has three ranks: assistant professor, associate professor and professor, whilst others only have two. De la Rey (1999) further referred to the definition of a lecturer in different countries. For instance, in New Zealand, the definition of a lecturer differs in terms of what is required, in comparison to the definition that is used in the USA. However, despite these variations, it can be concluded that women are lagging behind their male counterparts in terms of accessing senior academic positions. Ranking considers the research productivity of HEIs through statistics that aggregate the quality and quantity of publications (Hallinger, 2014). There is also an emphasis on international standards in publications (Baker, 2012). Gender gaps have a significant impact on promotional opportunities for women, as research productivity is rated higher than years of service teaching and learning. Furthermore, previous research confirms gender gaps in research productivity across genders, with women publishing less than their male colleagues (Butler-Adam, 2015). The common trend is that the higher the position in the academic hierarchy, the lower the representation of women (Bagilhole, 1993; Subbaye & Vithal, 2016). Researchers have identified several issues that seem to hamper research productivity, particularly for women academics. The issues mentioned in the various discourses included family expectations and burden, less time for research, and different priorities (Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Mouton, 2007; Prozesky, 2006). These issues will be dealt with in detail in section 4.7.1 below.

Historically, studies have shown that men have dominated the senior positions in UK HEIs and that the representation of women in top academic jobs was very limited (Association of University Teachers, 1999; Bagilhole, 1993; Brooks, 1997; Eggins, 1997; Morley, 1994). The salaries of academic women were one-fifth less than those

of academic men (Knights & Richards, 2001), and there was evidence of rampant sex discrimination in UK universities, which demanded action (Wilson, 1999). The underrepresentation of women academics in UK universities did not change much decades later, when White (2004) and Mavin and Bryans (2002) reported a higher proportion of women academics in lower ranks, with greater teaching and administrative loads, and fewer opportunities for research. The picture has not changed much, even in the recently established method for funding research in UK universities. Recent statistics show that British universities have made little progress in terms of the promotion of women, blacks and other minorities to senior academic positions (Equality and Higher Education Staff Statistical Report, 2018). According to the recent Equality and Higher Education Staff Statistical Report (2018), only one in four professors in UK were women, and of those women, 92% were white. The actual number of women professors that was reported was 4735, 4000 of whom were white and 25 black.

In Europe, only 20% of women are on professoriate level (European Commission [EC], 2013), while in Australia and the United States of America (USA), women professors represent 25% (Morley, 2014) out of 29% of academics (American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2014) of academics. This means that even in Europe, women advancement in academia has not kept pace with the rising numbers of women students. In a survey conducted in 24 European countries, it was discovered that despite what history has told us, women now outnumber men in higher education in postgraduate studies, with an average of 103 women for every 100 men (Shatalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2011). Nevertheless, women still make up 13% of university professors and 22 % of associate professors (Ledwith & Manfredi, 2000; Shatalebi & Yarmohammadian, 2011).

White (2001) reported similarities with women academics in Australia, emphasising the high participation rate of women at below lecturer and lecturer levels. In Australia, whilst 16.1% of professors in 2003 were female, only 11 % of them were full professors (Ward, 2003). Brown (2009), postulated that a typical Australian woman professor was between 51 and 60 years old, with men reaching the peak of their academic careers between the ages of 45 and 49, while women only did so five years later. Wilson, Marks, Noone and Hamilton-Mackenzie (2010, p. 543) attributed the lack of

progression to senior ranks among Australian women academics to 'competing ideologies, beliefs and values underlying the legal, workplace and policy responses to equality of opportunity for promotion in HEIs'. A lack of critical mass of senior academic women, resulting in fewer role models, coupled with women's reluctance to apply for promotion, may also reduce the number of applicants for promotion (Winchester, Lorenzo & Browning, 2006). However, counter arguments ascribe women's restraint in terms of applying for promotion to excessive pressure to meet research criteria, such as raising research grant funds, which results in declining ambition, mainly among women (Wilson et al., 2010).

In African Commonwealth countries such as Nigeria (8.4%), Tanzania (12.4%) and Uganda (14.7%), the percentage of women professors is among the lowest (Morley, 2005). O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) and Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012) discovered that women in Africa who are over 50 years old now enter academia, because past societal pressures to marry, stay at home, and raise a family, which rendered their career aspirations unexplored until their children were grown up, have now faded, and the opportunity to return to school for higher degrees or re-enter academia is now available. An institutional culture that can accommodate the realities facing women of childbearing and childrearing age is therefore needed. Mukangara (2013) attests to the fact that several constraints hinder women academics from competing effectively with their male counterparts to secure research opportunities and publish, to gain promotion. These constraints include, amongst others, time spent on childbearing, household chores, and lack of networking (Mukangara, 2013).

In South Africa, research clearly shows a gap between male and female academics, as clearly demonstrated in section 1.2.2 of chapter one, which deals with current capacity challenges and continuing gender inequities. The next section elaborates on women in academia in South African HEIs.

4.3 WOMEN IN ACADEMIA: THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

As already noted, racial and gender grouping under the policy of apartheid played a significant role in shaping the South African society and resulted in extensive inequalities. Teboho and Cloete (1995) stated that the HE system in South Africa was

viewed as one that perpetuated inequality, was hugely wasteful, and failed to serve the human resource needs of the country. Thus, HE in South Africa accurately reflected the society within which it was located (Teboho & Cloete, 1995). Furthermore, black women were only been subjected to race, class and gender discrimination, but also experienced discrimination from within the ranks of women themselves, women who served to re-enforce paternalism and the marginalised position of black women (Clarke, 2010; Hull, Scott & Smith, 1982). Whilst women of all races have always had to overcome obstacles in order to succeed, the challenge has always been double for the black woman because of race and gender (Ramohai, 2019). This phenomenon had negative consequences for the HE system because women academics' potential was never fully realised or optimised, thereby depriving HEIs and the broader community of access to some of the country's best minds for research (Carrigan & Riskin, 2016). This also deprived younger women, who are/were potential future academics, of sufficient role models to inspire them to strive towards an academic career (Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012). It further implied that women had no voice, or their voice was limited in the decision-making processes in HEIs, and thus the shaping of HEIs.

Although the postgraduate enrolments continue to increase, there were only 4073 associate professors and professors, 4579 senior lecturers, and 8701 lecturers in South Africa HEIs at the time of writing this thesis report (CHE Report, 2017/8; DHET Report, 2017/8). This suggests that though the growth in student enrolment has been considerable, the growth in the academic staff complement has not kept pace, such that the student to staff ratio, which has always been less than desirable, has worsened over the past two decades (CHE, 2017/8). Many explanations have been posited for these statistics, with some even arguing that although the South African HE system has experienced considerable growth, this growth has not been met with sufficient funding to enable the national goals of HE to be fully achieved, and the prospects for a sustainable increase in funding are negligible, according to the NDP Vision 2030. The NPC (2012) argued that the imperative to increase access by increasing student numbers has been met, but the academic staff complement has not grown concomitantly. Institutional management and staff sometimes have to deliver on competing objectives. This puts the HE system in South Africa under enormous pressure, with a number of institutions struggling to keep the HE project alive (CHE, 2015). In addition, not every postgraduate who qualifies is interested in pursuing an

academic career, thus leaving the burden of supervision to those who are in HEIs, and these academics still have a teaching burden, as well as other academic responsibilities.

However, achieving equality in a differentiated HE system has been more complex and difficult than was imagined. The institutional merger process brought with it a new taxonomy of HEI types, which are described below:

- Universities – in the more traditional character of teaching and research, offering qualifications from the three-year Bachelor's degree to doctoral level qualifications, with a strong focus on postgraduate and research activities,
- Comprehensive universities – offering qualifications from the higher certificate to doctoral levels, with some related research activity,
- Universities of technology – offering predominantly undergraduate qualifications with some postgraduate and research activity, all with a strong focus on industrial and technological disciplines (CHE, 2016).

These changes in the HE landscape had far-reaching consequences for the improvement of staff qualifications. As far as improving the proportion of academics with doctoral qualifications, the NPC target of 75% by 2030 seems to be extremely ambitious, given the current statistics (NDP, Vision 2030). To achieve this target and bridge the gender gap requires a dedicated national programme, supported by adequate funding, which is targeting the previously marginalised groups and women in particular. Thus, the more PhD graduates, the better the situation, although it cannot be assumed that all accomplished PhDs will be interested in academia. There should be designated programmes to attract and retain women academics until they obtain doctorates. Without any doubt, there have been major shifts over the past two decades, but the rewards of mentoring are still to be reaped, especially by the previously disadvantaged communities. This has even affected the number of women who enrol for postgraduate studies, as there are few role models in academia.

Even though research indicates that women face more peculiar professional and personal barriers to career progression, compared to their male counterparts (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2013), women have been moving through the ranks of academia

in South Africa (HEMIS Report, 2015). The main argument, however, is that although there has been a pronounced increase from 2009-2016 in the number of women with PhDs (CHE Report, 2017/8), and thus women entering academia, this has not been matched by the distribution of women academics across academic ranks. While there may be greater gender parity at the entry-level rank of lecturer, and even over-representation below these levels (Wilson et al., 2010), women are still significantly far from achieving parity with men in professorial positions (Bagilhole, 2000; Carvalho & Santiago, 2010; Goransson, 2011; Hesli, Lee & Mitchell, 2012; Ward, 2001). The unique gender-race context in South Africa requires women to be prioritised in transforming higher education institutions (Ramohai, 2019). This implies that the pool, from which the ranks of the next generation of scholars and academics will be filled, is growing, even though representation remains small. In trying to understand this phenomenon of the dearth of women in senior academic positions, I decided to investigate the requirements to succeed in academia, which are described in the section below.

4.4 REQUIREMENTS TO ADVANCE IN ACADEMIA

Career success is defined as the positive material and psychological outcomes resulting from one's work activities and experiences, with outcomes including both objective and subjective components (Greenhaus et al., 2019). The traditional view of success defines success in objective terms, such as compensation, number of promotions, and other tangible trappings of accomplishment. Greenhaus et al. (2010) defined objective career success as an obsession with the speed of progression, and according to this view, meeting career goals may sometimes come at the expense of other personal accomplishments. Subjective career success, on the other hand, includes aspects such as work-family balance and forming good relationships, and is not obsessed with upward movement, focusing instead on other aspects of the personal fulfillment that one gets through one's career. Gaining access to academia and making a success out of an academic career is indisputably an elaborate and demanding process (Aiston & Jung, 2015; Geber, 2009; Zulu, 2013).

In HE, academic success is determined by, amongst other factors, obtaining a doctorate qualification and producing research outputs. Poole and Bornholt (1998, 2009) characterised an academic in terms of three main activities; research, teaching and consulting, and according to them, women tend to be more involved in teaching and other student-related activities. According to De la Rey's (2002) study, women reported that research and publication were the most difficult areas, and that teaching represented an area of job satisfaction. The factors that facilitate research productivity, according to Geber (2009) and Prozesky (2008), are workloads that allow time for research; a network of fellow scholars and mentors; and international conference attendance. Zulu (2013) state that in principle, women and men academics have an equal opportunity of succeeding under the prevailing academic conditions and constraints, and the available opportunities and resources related to research productivity. However, in reality, there appears to be some underlying factors that, in women academics' view, inhibit their research productivity, even under presumably equal conditions.

Globalisation is another influence that has placed additional pressure on women in HE to produce more research. Between 1998 and 2000, the number of women in academia began to increase (Probert, 2005). Hallinger (2014) and Leonard (1998) agreed that there was a corresponding increase in women representation during this period, even at senior lecturer and professor levels, although their representation in the professoriate was still unacceptably low. With the globalization of HE, South Africa is now competing with developed and developing countries in terms of research outputs. Global rankings have become increasingly important and tend to favour research-intensive universities (De Witte & Hudrlikova, 2013). These ranking organisations assess the research productivity of HE through statistics that aggregate the quality and quantity of faculty publications (Hallinger, 2014). This emphasis on international standards and the performativity audit culture of contemporary HE demand tangible, measurable research outputs, with a focus on both the quality and the quantity of academic publications (Baker, 2012). The publish or perish culture (Lee & Lee, 2013) puts HEIs in South Africa, as elsewhere, under increasing pressure to compete internationally, particularly in measuring research performance and allocating performance-based funding (Hallinger, 2013; Deem, et al., 2008). The number of publications, particularly in peer-reviewed journals, is the most widely used indicator of

research productivity across academic disciplines (Aiston & Jung, 2015). It is the most important determinant of career progression and allows for comparative analysis (Litwin, 2013). Although research confirms the gender gap in research productivity, with women academics publishing less on average than their male colleagues (Butler-Adam, 2015) do, this does not mean that no women have excelled in research, doing better than their male counterparts. These women are referred to as high flyers (Ismail et al., 2005). The consequence of this gender gap in the prestige economy of HE is highly significant in a promotion system that often favours research over teaching and service (Baker, 2012), thereby putting most women academics at a disadvantage, as promotional opportunities sometimes find them unprepared.

Since research activities and outputs are traditionally prioritised in academic promotions, from both historical and contemporary perspectives, academic promotions have enabled the progression of males to the professoriate level (Aiston & Jung, 2015; Geber, 2009; Zulu, 2013). Several studies postulated that women are under-represented and disadvantaged in the academic promotion process, because promotions and, ultimately, rank progression to the professoriate, have traditionally depended on research productivity (Aiston & Jung, 2015; Bagilhole, 2000; Doherty & Manfredi, 2006; Morley, 2014; O'Meara, 2015; Parker, 2008; Todd & Bird, 2000; Vithal, Subbaye & North, 2013; Ward, 2001; Wilson et al., 2010; Winchester, Lorenzo & Browning, 2006). Various authors identified numerous factors that influence the promotion outcomes of women. Harris, Ravenswood and Myers (2013) and Ward (2001) showed that women had lower publication records than men, were less likely to switch HEIs, and were more likely to work as temporary staff who exited the system when their contracts expired, all of which damaged their chances of promotion.

The long hours that full-time professors are expected to work could be one reason why women have made less progress in attaining senior academic positions. HEIs are becoming gendered organisations (Acker, 1990), just like families, as women tend to spend more of their time on housework and caring for family members than employed men do. Consequently, women are unable to obtain doctoral degrees as quickly as their male counterparts, *other things being equal,* due to their multi-faceted roles (Langin, 2018). According to Langin (2018), women with no female peers were 12 percentage points less likely to complete their PhDs within the record time than men

in the same cohort. Regarding the underlying reasons for PhD attrition, there was no definite answer, according to Langin, Bostwick and Weinberg (2018). There is an assumption that a woman of childbearing age who falls pregnant during her studies has a limited chance of succeeding in finishing the doctorate timeously, compared to her male counterpart, whose wife fell pregnant during his PhD. Therefore, males can obtain their doctorates while their wives are having and raising children. This often leaves women less qualified than their male counterparts, and thus unable to meet the hiring and promotion requirements for senior academic posts. Managa (2013) and Ogbogu (2011) claimed that although women and men supposedly have the potential to enjoy a successful career, women still struggle to balance life and work, hence men tend to dominate academia.

Clearly, the paucity of women in research productivity is attributable to several disabling factors that women regularly encounter in their career and family life.

4.5 BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A barrier is defined as a factor, phenomenon or event that prevents or controls individuals' progress (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2008; Maskell-Pretz & Hopkins, 1977; Rahman, 2012). Barriers may be tangible or intangible, actual or perceived by the recipient (Saadin, Ramli, Johari & Harin, 2016). Career barriers have been described as any factor that thwarts the achievement of career goals (Crites, 1969). They have stereotypically been viewed as either internal to the person, such as lack of confidence or low motivation, or external to the person, such as lack of access to education and poverty, or both. Crites (1969) identified barriers as either internal conflicts or external frustrations that might impede career development.

Previous studies have identified several professional and personal barriers that explain the gender gap. Some of the most prominent work-related barriers noted in the literature are gender stereotyping (Michiliadis, Morphitou & Theophylatou, 2012) and discrimination, a lack of networking and mentoring opportunities (Forret & Dougherty, 2004), sexual harassment, salary inequities, a lack of training and career advancement, and an inadequate work-life balance (Misra, Lundquist & Templer, 2012). Other barriers include questions about women's lack of self-efficacy and self-

confidence, support barriers, and interest congruence (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2013). These barriers might be the result of societal influences exerted by parents, teachers, and industry advisors (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2013). Several authors attribute this to the phenomenon of “glass ceiling” (Berkery, Morley & Tierman, 2013; Gatrell, Cooper & Kossek, 2010; Michiliadis, Morphitou & Theophylatou, 2012; Powell & Graves, 2003; Van Veldhoven & Beijer, 2012), already explained in section 4.2.

Asmar (1999) noted that women experience some level of difficulty and barriers to their progress in carving out an academic career. Ismail et al. (2005) emphasised that a patriarchal and non-conducive organisational culture and management practices discourage women from entering academia. The study also showed that stereotypical perceptions based on male standards, work-family conflict, and discriminatory practices influence performance evaluation. Zulu (2013) supported this by stating that patriarchy remains a historical reality, and that it is part and parcel of women academics’ experiences in South African HEIs. Levinson (2005) observed that in addition to lack of access to resources and support, women themselves lack confidence in their ability to occupy senior positions, and this is something that could be explored further through future research.

In summary, there is consensus in the literature that differences in societal practices relating to the organisation of social relations (Ibrahim, 2008; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004) are largely responsible for these gender differences. Inequality exists in the burden of home-making, childcare and family roles (Dilworth, 2004; Dilworth & Kingsbury, 2005), as well as in the gender differentiation associated with certain roles, such as teaching (Hattie & Marsh, 1996) and research roles (Barbezat, 2006). Women receive opportunities in the work environment in ways that might constrain their choices from a young age (Gottfredson, 1981; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997; Riegle-Crumb, Moore, & Ramos-Wada, 2011). Factors such as low self-efficacy, little perceived encouragement, and few role models could create barriers in terms of career choice (Lent et al., 1994; Wood & Bandura, 1989). However, some women do pursue academic careers, succeed in their efforts, and find the work enjoyable and satisfying. Identifying a combination of factors that help women to succeed in academia could help offset some of these barriers. In addition, doing more career research could help women in academia to develop strategies and traits for their advancement. Other

career setbacks are giving birth and taking maternity leave, which exclude women from the work environment for at least four months.

In the next section, the *barriers of family-work balance, culture, gender role theories, self-efficacy, and lack of mentoring are discussed.*

4.5.1 Family-work balance

Any study looking at family in the twenty first century must acknowledge the changing family patterns prevalent in the society and not assume a family unit as comprising of the traditional family structure only. Owing to the important legacies of colonialism and apartheid, family life was disrupted (Hall & Posel, 2019). Hall & Posel (2019) argued that the marginalization of Africans in "homelands," where there were few employment opportunities, forced people in South Africans to migrate to urban areas to find employment, however a range of restrictions prevented family migration or permanent settlement at the urban destinations. Regardless of the removal of legal barriers post-apartheid, to permanent urbanization and family co-residence, established patterns of labor migration had endured, resulting to dual or stretched households which continued to link urban and rural nodes, with the effect of women and children who remained less urbanized than their men (Hall & Posel, 2019). This is another explanation to why some women found themselves lagging behind compared to their male counterparts with regards to career development, as they remained at home and nurtured children and did general house-keeping, an inherited situation that remains a reality, decades after the legacies of colonialism and apartheid have gone, resulting in the current capacity challenges and gaps in representation, and the whole debate of gender roles and expectations.

These gender divisions have hugely impacted family-work balance as one of the critical factors in determining career success, owing to the belief that women's priority is family, and that work comes second, which became a hindrance to the career development of women. Some women consciously choose family because they do not see how they can combine a successful career with their responsibilities at home (McLellan & Uys, 2009). However, as already outlined, family is no longer reserved for households with children and two married biological parents but consists of an

assortment of family structures, such as stepparents, single parents, and cohabiting parents. As these non-traditional families become more prominent, researchers have attempted to better understand how they affect children's outcomes (Powell, Bolzendahl, Geist, & Steelman, 2010). Within the mix of family structures are also same-sex couples. Lesbian mothers or gay fathers and their children are a small albeit notable and socially contentious example of a family structure whose influence on children's development continues to be debated (Powell et al., 2010).

A potential imbalance in the balancing of work and family roles in any of these family structures could lead to role conflict (McLellan & Uys, 2009). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) asserted that work and family conflict occur when participation in the work role and the family role is incompatible in some respect. As a result, participation in one role is rendered difficult by virtue of participation in the other role. The performance of an individual's family role can create a state of cognitive busyness and consume time, both on and off the job. Activities such as providing care to elderly parents, infant children, or family members with special needs, dealing with domestic relation issues with spouses or domestic partners, maintenance of social relationships outside the family, or even routine household maintenance, frequently require a woman's time and attention while working (Leaptrott & McDonald, 2010). Consequently, women's family and work roles tend to overlap during both work and non-work periods.

The cumulative demands of multiple roles can result in two types of conflicts: work interference in family (work-family conflict), and family interference in work (family-work conflict) (Kinnunen, Rantanen & Mauno, 2004). Kinnune, et.al. (2004) indicated that interference from family to work occurs when family-role responsibilities hinder performance at work, for instance, a child's illness prevents attendance at work. According to Ford, Heinen and Langkamer (2007), work-family conflict (WFC) addresses the impact of work on the family, whereas family-work conflict (FWC) addresses the impact of the family on the work activities of the family member. WFC arises when pressures from work become incompatible with those from daily family responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutel, 1985). To be executed satisfactorily, each of these roles demands time, energy, and commitment. In other words, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role (Greenhaus et al., 2019). Carlson, Kacmar and Stephina (1995) further stated that

conflict is a result of employees extending their efforts to satisfy their work demands, at the expense of their family demands or vice versa.

Tension and anxiety related to family life might decrease an individual's performance on the job. In addition, there will be behaviour-based conflict, as the behavioural styles used in one role may be incompatible with the behaviours expected in another role. For example, the behaviours that are appropriate at home may not be effective at work (Westring & Ryan, 2011). According to Mason and Goulden (2002), results relating to the effect of academic careers on family formation show that women who successfully pursue ladder-rank faculty careers are quite different in their patterns of family formation from men who achieve ladder rank. In comparison to women who drop out of the pipeline to tenure, ladder-rank faculty women are less likely to marry and have children and are more likely to divorce. Thornton and Young-De Marco (2001) posited that ladder-rank faculty women might be making conscious decisions to forgo or delay family formation, to better their careers. Thornton and Young-de Marco (2001) went on to say that some of these women may choose to drop out of the pipeline to marry and have children, or to avoid divorce.

Being an academic is often branded as one of the professions with large amounts of flexibility and autonomy. Academics come close to being their own supervisors, even if they are employees. With the development of technology and flexible working arrangements, the possibility of working from home has increased for them. However, at the same time, studies from the UK (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006) and the USA (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004) showed that while academics have a high level of flexibility at work, they also have to deal with an intensification of their workload and long working hours. This explains why academics take work home and do not have fixed working hours, which means that an academic is likely to experience burnout.

In a patriarchal society such as we have in South Africa, especially with the traditional family structure, women academics are more likely to experience work-family conflict involving incompatible demands than their male counterparts. For instance, a woman working on her PhD and/or publication record is expected to demonstrate a high level of competence equal to that of a male academic, hence they both should devote time for doing research. Coupled with other domestic responsibilities that must be managed

on a daily basis, these role expectations can potentially create tension and anxiety for the woman academic. Consistent with the explanations of how women negotiate femininity in a masculine workplace, evidence suggests that women in academia who decide to have children do so without workplace flexibility and support, instead devising individual solutions that do not disturb the status quo (Evetts, 1994), a situation that has not changed much two decades later. It is possible that women will perceive the potential for conflict as heightened in academia, as opposed to career fields dominated by women. Because of these work-related expectations, women have the perception that they must perform exceptionally well to secure their positions next to lower-achieving male peers, and that they need to stay current with ever-changing technical knowledge (Eden, 1992). According to Lackritz (2004), one out of five university teachers in the USA displayed serious burnout symptoms. Another study among university staff in the USA, Canada and UK found that university teachers scored consistently lower on the work satisfaction variable, and that they were more negative about their workload and work–family balance than other university staff (Horton, 2006). This means that WLB is not unique to South African HEIs but is a global phenomenon. Furthermore, the challenge of juggling family and work commitments is a reality for academic women, as it is for women working in other sectors of the economy. Dealing with hostile organisational climates that do not support the different roles fulfilled by women continues to constrain women's efforts to succeed, not only in academia, but in different sectors of the economy as well. However, it is still worth mentioning that within this environment, some women academics have been noticeably more successful than others. Nevertheless, we still do not have a clear picture of the factors that contributed to their career success, and this will be partly dealt with in section 4.6 below. Again, it is the purpose of this empirical study to clarify the variables that contribute to women academics' career success.

4.5.2 Culture

Culture is defined as the normative beliefs and shared behavioural expectations in an organisational unit (Cooke & Szumal, 1993; Westring, 2012). There is an ongoing perception that the university environment has a masculine culture (Schwanke, 2013). Researchers such as Hofstede (1983) and Neelankavil, Mathur and Zhang (2000) shared the view that organisations exist within cultural contexts, hence management

and employee assumptions, and behavioural and organizational structures and functions, are influenced by national culture. Over the past two decades, the participation of women in universities, not just as graduates, but also as academics, has increased considerably. However, several issues still need to be resolved.

Women face two types of structural issues; some are found in society in general, and others are found in corporate settings (Schwanke, 2013). Societal issues are those forces that are deeply rooted in culture and public policy. The factors emanating from society that contribute to the limited career advancement of women usually include some aspects of social programmes and policy, limited human capital, and the societal expectation of female participation in service industries, such as education, health services, and social and community services (Eagly & Sczesny, 2009). Those found in corporate settings include organisational culture, which is often cited as a key facilitator of or barrier to the career development of women in organisations (Hofstede, 1980). Harvey and Brown (1996) and Hofstede (1980) defined organisational culture as a system of shared meanings, values, beliefs, practices, and group norms of the members, to produce behavioural norms with regard to the working conditions of the organisation. Tsoka (2010) explained culture as a social environment that discourages women from pursuing career paths in the fields of science, engineering, technology, etc. Organisational policies are informed by the cultural values and beliefs of the organisation. A supportive culture can improve morale and motivate people to reduce stress and absenteeism (Wise & Bond, 2003). Quinlan (1999, p. 32) wrote that when compared with male academics, “academic women experience greater isolation, higher levels of stress, a lower sense of self-efficacy and self-confidence and more difficulty in establishing relationships with colleagues, a feeling of being an outsider in masculine cultures”. Consequently, many women academics with career aspirations tend to leave universities, and this makes it more difficult for women to establish a critical mass (White, 2003). It would be interesting to determine how the picture has changed three decades later in terms of how women experience culture in their various institutions.

The unrecognised features of the organisational culture, which affect men and women differently, call for a deeper understanding of the national culture and how it impacts women in academia. This will help in establishing organisational cultures which are more accommodative of the differences between men and women, and which are

supportive of women's aspirations. Despite all the developments that continue to take place in and around us, there are still societal values and expectations that continue to oppress women's attitudes and discourage women from taking risks in academia. Negative patriarchal societies make women lag behind their male counterparts in terms of their development, not only in academia, but also in business, politics, and generally (Hendricks, 2003).

The way women glean messages from the dominant culture regarding what types of jobs are suitable for women, and gendered expectations of behavioural influence, can constrain young women's career interests, self-efficacy, views of parenthood, and achievement motivation (Hendricks, 2003). Once a woman finds herself equipped with the resources required to enter a university for postgraduate studies, and with ambitions for an academic career, these socialisation processes could hypothetically continue to imprison her, because she may find herself with fewer female than male mentors and professors. She might be successful and become an academic, finding herself balancing her feelings of being marginalised, isolated and frustrated with her work, together with collegial relationships that have the expectation that she must be more "likeable" than "competent" (Krefting, 2003, p. 269). She may occasionally be summoned to perform activities in service of the institution that reinforce the gendered nature of "housework" (Valian, 2005, p. 205). Depending on the institution, performing service-oriented activities for the institution may help (Sampson et al., 2010) or hurt (Misra et al., 2011) her progress towards promotion and tenure. This may lead academic women to drop out of the pipeline, and for those women who do not exit, they may face lingering discriminatory practices and beliefs in an organisation where the culture is not sensitive to women's needs, as they navigate their career goals in a male-dominated academic institution.

Despite researchers identifying a number of barriers to women's advancement in academia, including a masculine organisational culture (White, 2003), inadequate networks, mentors and role-models (Quinlan, 1999), work and family imbalances (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004) and gender power imbalance in the workplace (Oakley, 2000), there has been little comparative research which explores the influence of national culture on women's career progression in academia, and this could be an area for further research. White (2001) argued that the organisational culture could

disadvantage women in terms of attaining top positions and having power. Ogbogu (2011) supported this by stating that an institutional culture can suppress women's full potential to advance in academia, which can result in women leaving academia for better opportunities in other sectors of the economy, if they perceive the culture to be more accommodating and supportive to their challenges. Singh (2002), on the other hand, argued that psychosocial, structural and cultural values could act as hindrances to the advancement of a woman's career. Managa (2013) confirmed that factors that impede the ability of women to publish and climb the academic ladder stem from psychosocial, structural, and cultural perspectives, as well as the organisational culture.

4.5.3 Gender role and social role theory

Women and men are socialised and experience life differently, and these differences cannot be ignored when studying career development. As the number of women in the workforce continues to increase, so do the challenges in managing their career advancement in what used to be a man's world. Gender roles are sets of (written and unwritten) norms prescribing the behaviours and activities appropriate for each sex (Connell, 2002; Konrad & Linnehan, 1999). Gender roles are not fixed, but are constantly negotiated between individuals. These roles can influence all kinds of behaviour, including the choice of work and career development. Stereotyping is the process of categorising an individual into a particular group and attributing a set of characteristics to the individual on the basis of group membership (Davidson & Cooper, 1993). Gender or sex stereotypes are shared beliefs about the psychological traits of women and men (Konrad & Linnehan, 1999; Moore, 1995).

Traditionally, society has always maintained that a woman's place is in the kitchen (Jacob, 1999; Moore, 1995). However, with the introduction of education and the changing roles of women, they started to participate in the public domain and progressed to the managerial ranks. Women would typically work for a period after completing their education, then marry and raise children, and only then decide whether or not to re-enter the labour force (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2011). Family formation patterns are increasingly changing, with both men and women wanting to establish themselves in the labour market before

starting a family. Therefore, the age of mothers having their first child has risen, and with it the probability of having fewer children than previous generations (OECD, 2011). However, there are still women who follow the old career pattern. Hefferman (2002) and Fels (2004) argued that for women to pursue any endeavour, including their ambitions, it can be calculated roughly based on two factors: firstly, how certain the individual is that she will be able to attain the desired goal, and secondly, how valued the expected rewards are. A lack of appropriate affirmation of accomplishments, in combination with threats to women's gender identity, inevitably leads to demoralisation (Fels, 2004). Women are normally left with choices such as whether to stay in the organisation but maintain a low profile in their careers; to stay, knowing that they have reached a plateau in their career; or to abandon their work altogether.

The socialisation process either encourages wanted, or discourages unwanted, behaviour. Women and men's socialisation are influenced by gender roles and stereotypes (Eccles, 1986). Gender socialisation prepares men and women for different types of activities, and children are socialised from birth to conform to their feminine or masculine roles (Eccles, 1986). For women, this means coming to value their expected roles as caregivers and developing the interpersonal skills that endorse nurturing (Metzler-Brennan, Lewis & Gerrard, 1985). These skills and values are learned early in life and are then translated into career choices that offer congruence between work and the requirements of femininity (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). In general, characteristics associated with femininity cluster work choices around those that offer intrinsic rewards in a relational context and are seen as helping people (Whiston & Brecheisen, 2002).

Eagly's (1987) social role theory is based on the principle that people have different expectations about how others should behave based on their gender. Obstacles such as gender role stereotypes and perceived gender roles continue to hamper women who are attempting to attain senior positions (Nadler & Stockdale, 2012). These gender role stereotypes fit in with the social role theory and may play a part in understanding why women in masculine-type occupations, such as management, face harsher performance evaluations and are less likely to advance further (Eagly & Koenig, 2008). The social role theory postulates that because people view others in a particular social role, they tend to generalise, seeing others who belong to that group as having the

same characteristics, thereby creating stereotypes (Wood & Eagly, 2012). Based on this theory and the role of stereotyping, occupational roles become more distinguishable (Koenig & Eagly, 2014), even though groups are unlikely to be equally represented in these roles. Furthermore, women are said to possess inherently more democratic leadership styles compared to men, who are viewed as autocratic (Evans, 2010). As a result, when it comes to gender stereotypes, there is a perception that men have the qualities mostly associated with managerial success: competitiveness, self-confidence, ambition and emotional stability (Sheaffer, Bogler & Sarfaty, 2011).

Social comparison is a central feature of human social life (Festinger, 1954). The tendency to engage in social comparison would appear to be a natural and innately human characteristic (Buunk & Gibbson, 2006). Although considerable research has established this concept, relatively little is known about the role of gender in social comparison (Guimond & Chatard, 2014). The social comparison theory proposed by Festinger (1954) did not address sex differences, and neither did other studies that are related to the theory, in order to explain social comparison. However, researchers have begun to examine another explanation for social comparison in the context of gender differences. For example, Major and Forsey (1985, p. 402) argued, “sex may be a fundamental attribute for social comparison purposes”. More recently, Guimond, Chatard, Martinot, Crisp and Redersdorff (2014) found that people in relatively traditional societies are more likely to compare themselves to their own sex, whereas people in relatively modern societies are more likely to compare themselves to the opposite sex. With regard to women’s careers, Abele and Spurk (2009) claimed that women might set lower career standards than men, and that regardless of their lower salaries, women are generally as satisfied with their careers as men are. Another explanation relates to women’s choice of career role models. Research suggests that individuals are more likely to base their career expectations on information provided by individuals of the same gender (Heckert et al., 2002). These results are compatible with the notion that men and women in relatively traditional societies report smaller personality differences than men and women in relatively modern societies (Lippa, 2010).

Due to the nature of the roles of men and women in our society, the primary responsibility for family caregiving often lies with women, and such responsibility

affects the working lives of women more than those of men (Festinger, 1954). Employment standards that apply to one g-ender only have serious potential for encouraging employers to discriminate against employees and applicants for employment who belong to that gender (Jennings, 2010). It appears that while the South African labour force no longer abides by the past norm, where the mother stayed at home with the children, and where the father was the only spouse who worked outside the home, the stereotypes and perceptions of women continue to linger (Brown, 2010). Mothers who work outside the home face greater challenges than men with respect to work and family responsibilities and roles (Brown, 2010).

4.5.4 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is a significant predictor of people's career trajectories. Persons with positive self-efficacy tend to engage thoughtfully (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990), and as a result, succeed in current learning activities and prepare themselves better for future academic pursuits that allow them to consider more career options (Bandura, Gonzales, Laurent & Holman, 2001). Similarly, women and men pursue careers based on their values and beliefs regarding whether they will succeed in their chosen fields. However, there are some barriers and obstacles to the confidence and motivation of entry-level women faculty members, due to unfair hiring practices, perceptions of the challenges and issues faced by individual women faculty members, and a lack of career role models and mentors for women (Ip, 2011). Ip (2011, p. 1030) further claimed that "many women also put their career aspirations on hold or give them up altogether when they reach the period of their lives where they want to start a family, based on the idea that family-work commitments will impact their careers and place them at a disadvantage in academia". In the career development context, it is well known that occupational self-efficacy is one of the important predictors of career interests and choice (Branch & Lichtenberg, 1987; Rooney & Osipow, 1992). For example, by discovering the role played by self-efficacy beliefs in the academic and career paths of men, Zeldin and Pajares (2000) concluded that women college students typically demonstrate lower self-efficacy regarding traditionally male careers, as well as college courses and tasks that are mathematics-related. Motivation influences students' academic engagement and achievement, as well as future academic and career choices (Bandura et al., 2001; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990).

Even in the face of the growing progressive shift, internal beliefs and values implanted during childhood can turn into barriers, shaping women's choice of career ambitions. Obstacles and barriers hindering women's careers are often used as excuses − it is much easier to blame environmental factors than to accept that women's fear of success or their simple unwillingness to climb the corporate ladder could be the reason why men succeed. Sometimes, women underestimate their own self-efficacy to hold leadership positions (Bandura, 1977), or in this case, to pursue higher degrees and an academic career. Therefore, these women often fail to exploit the available opportunities to realise their potential as academics.

4.5.5 Lack of mentoring

The potential of women in society has not been fully reached, partially owing to the dearth of women in highly visible public or private roles (Martins, 2013). This phenomenon has, for decades, continued to deny young girls an opportunity to see and hear the stories of women who have achieved success professionally, especially in disadvantaged communities. Empirical evidence suggests that while men have tried to reap the best mentoring relationships in the world of work, "women continue to be at a disadvantage due to the limited number of female mentors" (Schwiebert, Deck, Bradshaw, Scott & Harper, 1999, p. 1). This is exacerbated by women who are not prepared to mentor other younger women, as Salzman (1996) found that very few women in positions of authority are trying to mentor younger women. The major reason for their reluctance is that they feel that they are not being appropriately rewarded (Salzman, 1996). Mentoring in supporting environments is a strategy that can be used to develop and train capable and confident researchers to replace retiring academics (Schulze, 2010), whilst transforming the equity profile of researchers and academics in South Africa. Senior women academics can then mentor young women academics, which will enhance their self-esteem (Obers, 2014).

In the section below, I discuss the factors responsible for the success of women in academia.

4.6 SUCCESS FACTORS FOR WOMEN ACADEMICS

According to Schwanke (2013), women can perpetuate the barriers to their advancement, by choosing to respond to difficulties in unhelpful ways. Schwanke (2013) posited that if women see or experience barriers, they may respond by internalising them inappropriately, rationalising them through sense-making, or by avoiding the career altogether. Conversely, the perception that women do not advance because they shrink from opportunity, a choice termed the 'ambition gap', is a myth, according to Lang (2012). From this discussion, one can deduce that whether women are going to advance or not depends on how they respond to the barriers they experience on their career trajectory.

Gebers (2009) and Prozesky (2008) identified certain personal characteristics or situational conditions as facilitating research productivity. Gebers (2009) and Prozesky (2008) described prolific researchers as having the following traits: a strong self-esteem, good time and workload management, consistency in their levels of productivity, the ability to form stable relationships, and the ability to develop a good network of fellow scholars and strong mentors.

Ismail (2005) conducted a study that involved interviewing 31 women professors in a Malaysian university who attained professorship before the age of 48, to explore their career development experiences and the factors responsible for their success. The study revealed that factors associated with success in academia included the availability of opportunities for collaborative research, sabbatical leave, and the appointment of women to administrative positions. In this section, I outline some of the strategies used by successful women in academia.

4.6.1 The formal and informal networks of women academics

The old adage that it is not what you know, but who you know contains an element of truth when it comes to career development strategy (Ismail & Rasdi, 2007). Mavin and Bryans (2002) and Forret and Dougherty (2004) stressed that the key function of networking is supporting each other for purposes of career growth. In academia, however, networking involves more than just social interaction with peers. It is about

keeping up with developments in literature, doing innovative work, presenting research work at conferences, and doing publications together. Fetzer (2003) stated that networking is a mechanism to build a sense of community among scholars within a specific field.

Networking in academia is therefore essential in the face of the globalisation of HE, and the growing need for alliances between institutions and departments, both locally and internationally. The structural dominance of males in academia has led to women academics feeling excluded from knowledge production (Ismail & Rasdi, 2007; Mavin & Bryans, 2002; Nicolson, 1996).

Women who decide to support each other can bring about organisational and personal change because of informal collective strategies. Through her research on the organisational gender culture in academia, one woman facilitated contact with women academics from other departments and universities' informal networks (Mavin & Bryans, 2002). The women academics meet outside their organisations and have set agendas for each meeting, based on exchanging information, giving feedback on work, preparing for interviews, doing mock testing for research examinations, and acting as the audience for papers or presentations. In addition, problem-solving, advice and sharing of experiences in terms of everyday academic and management life, and how to effect change, are regular conversations. The women academics are committed to achieving specific outcomes and objectives for action at the end of each meeting (Mavin & Bryans, 2002). Quinlan (1999) also posited that women networks play a significant role in providing instrumental emotional, psychological and social support.
The advantages of networking are information exchange, collaboration, career planning and strategy, professional support and encouragement, and ultimately, opportunities for upward mobility (Ismail & Rasdi, 2007). In a study conducted by Ismail and Rasdi (2007) amongst high-flying women academics in Malaysian universities, the following were cited as networking opportunities: graduate studies, including the relationships formed during PhD studies, relationships with supervisors, visiting professors, and relationships with other scholars. All the above have created international opportunities and career mobility for high-flying women academics. Therefore, the impact of networks on the career development of women cannot be underestimated.

4.6.2 Career planning

Surviving and advancing in the professoriate is linked in part to early career choices (Soliman, 1998). These choices include the following: whether to juggle full-time teaching and postgraduate studies, whether to complete one's PhD before embarking on an academic career, whether to do a postdoctoral fellowship before becoming an academic, whether to have children, and whether to focus on either teaching or research, or both (White, 2004; White & Birch, 1999). While some women may have prioritised research and tackled patriarchy head-on, thereby managing to reach the associate professor level, others have become worn out by the lack of encouragement and discriminatory practices that prevail in HEIs (Prozesky, 2008; White, 2004). However, some were afforded opportunities to become Heads of Departments, thereby increasing their administrative burden, to the detriment of research (Lafferty & Fleming, 2000). It is therefore an individual choice to prioritise research, teaching or leadership.

4.6.3 Organisational culture

As already noted in 4.5.2 above, some women academics in South African HEIs perceive that their promotions are blocked because of direct and indirect discrimination (Zulu, 2013). The prevailing patriarchal attitudes are not encouraging to women. When women experience discrimination in the workplace, particularly ongoing, subtle forms of discrimination, they tend to internalise the incidents and take responsibility for what went wrong. This is because women in senior positions usually have high standards of meritocracy, which means that they believe that circumstances are largely a result of one's own actions (Barreto, Ellemers, Cihangir & Stroebe, 2009). Because of this belief, the subtle discrimination that is more prevalent in South African HEIs has a potential of lowering women's self-esteem. These situations present perceived, implied or vague barriers, such as being ignored, overlooked, or resisted. When this happens, they try to figure out what went wrong and take personal responsibility for the incident. What is undesirable about this approach, however, is that it does not address the underlying issue if the treatment comes from a colleague, or if a superior is discriminating against them in subtle ways, such as not inviting them to a meeting, ignoring them in a conversation, or overlooking a suggestion. If a superior discriminates against them in blatant ways, on the other hand, such as making overt

statements that women belong in certain roles or restricting educational development to men, the discrimination is easier to resist (Barreto et al., 2009). Reduced confidence in their abilities perpetuates women's feelings of inferiority and has a self-fulfilling effect.

Hamel (2009) advocated sense-making as a strategy to be used by women when patriarchy or discrimination is perceived. Sense-making involves the rationalisation of incongruent information and events (Hamel, 2009, p. 235). Research has found that women who are treated unfairly, particularly when the anticipated advancement or increased compensation is not forthcoming, will seek information, identify causes for the barriers, make sense of the incongruence, and then act in one of four ways. According to Hamel (2009, p. 250), these actions are to leave quietly, leave while voicing their objections to the discrimination, remain at work and be silent, or remain at work and try to raise awareness of the problem. Although the latter is best to initiate potential change, it is also the most difficult and least frequent choice. The vast majority of women (90%) leave quietly, which perpetuates any unresolved issues within their work environments.

What successful women have reported is raising the awareness of their superiors about overt and covert discriminatory practices, although women are usually scared of losing their job or think that no one will believe them, or that they will be discriminated against further if they come out. Moreover, due to the lack of support systems, they do not even trust the people to whom they report. One perspective on this unwillingness to raise awareness about difficult work environments is provided by Linda Robertson, a lawyer in Vancouver, who writes a blog about legal issues in Canada. In a post from November 15, 2010, she contended that women tend to foster harmony in the workplace and resist asking for raises, so that they will not jeopardise their positions. She also discusses a gender bias, in which a woman who advocates on her own behalf is seen by her colleagues as pushy and overbearing (Robertson, 2010).

4.6.4 Mentors

A review of extant literature on mentoring endorses the fact that there is no single definition of mentoring. Nevertheless, there is consensus with Kram's (1985) mentor role theory that mentoring plays two primary roles: firstly, to provide support at a career or vocation level in the way of sponsorship, coaching, protection, exposure and allocating challenging assignments; and secondly, to provide support at a psycho-social level by offering acceptance, confidence, counselling, friendship, and role modelling (Kram & Isabella, 1985). More precisely, mentoring can be defined as a process that is 'supportive, nurturing, and protective, providing orchestrated or structured experiences to facilitate growth' (Girves, Zepeda & Gwathmey, 2005, p. 453).

Thus, having a mentor or a network thereof has undoubtedly been found to be significant for women in different sectors, especially at the start of their careers (Ledwith & Manfredi, 2000), although women in predominantly male-gendered organisations have reported a much higher level of isolation and lack of recognition than their male colleagues (Middleton, 1998). Mentoring is considered to be one of the most important factors in explaining women's academic career progression (Joiner, et al., 2004). Mentoring in HEIs can be viewed as a developmental relationship, whereby senior academics provide assistance and support to novice researchers (protégés) on an individual basis (Baranik, 2010; Bozeman, 2007). The mentoring process can serve both career enhancement and psycho-social functions for the protégé. Career enhancement roles in mentoring include sponsorship, coaching, exposure, protection, and provision of challenging assignments. Recently, increasing attention has been paid to the role of mentors, not as teachers or advisors, but as gatekeepers within the work setting and the profession (Ibarra, Carter & Silva, 2010). This form of mentoring has been labelled sponsorship and includes active advocacy of the individual's opportunities within the institution and the profession, and open access to the mentor's own network of professional contacts (Crosby, 1999; Ragins & Kram, 2007).

The psycho-social functions of mentors include acceptance, counselling, emotional support and role modelling (Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker & Jacobs, 2006). Women who have been mentored have experienced career success, according to Gerber

(2009), Prozesky (2008) and Obers (2014), who all agreed that a network of fellow scholars and mentors, international conference attendance and forming strong and stable relationships are conducive for the academic success of women. Similarly, mentoring produces feelings of self-efficacy in one's belief that one can pursue an academic career and succeed (Curtin, Malley & Stewart, 2016).

4.6.5 Organisational support

According to Barnett and Bradley (2007), organisations that give support to women by introducing workplace policies that are user-friendly to them have seen many women succeed up to the upper echelons in the organisation. This presupposes a type of leadership that is sensitive to the changing needs of women. Organisations where top jobs have gone to women, or where there are men who hold power and who have pushed for change by coming up with radical strategies, such as gender audits, followed by positive action, are examples of this (Brown,1997).

Organisations with more flexible work arrangements that allow women to balance their work, family and student life will have more successful women, compared to an organisation that does not concern itself with the other roles that women have to fulfil. HEIs are well known for providing opportunities such as study leave, research and development leave, sabbatical leave, study subsidies, research grants, and support for local and international conferences to their permanent staff, both women and men. Furthermore, organisations such as the NRF assist HEIs to cope with the financial implications of these policies, by compensating replacement staff and providing external sources of funding that university staff and students can tap into.

Another way in which women respond to the barrier of lack of organisational support is by avoiding careers in which a higher rate of stereotyping or discrimination will occur (Schwanke, 2013). These tend to be male-dominated industries, particularly those that involve skills that are traditionally considered to be male strengths. Maths and science careers are included in this category. Women who experience insecurity about or disparaging reviews of their ability to perform mathematical and scientific tasks will choose careers that avoid these tasks (Zhang, Schmader & Forbes, 2009, p. 134).

This avoidance may be effective only in so far as it helps these women to achieve personal career success and satisfaction, but it is ineffective in addressing gender gaps in SET. Many of the jobs in SET are lucrative careers with good compensation packages, which means that women's absence from them contributes to the compensation gap between the genders.

4.6.6 Government interventions

Despite women's efforts, both individually and collectively, to fight for recognition and inclusion in senior academic positions and structures of governance and leadership, this will be difficult to achieve without any form of intervention from the government (Kiamba, 2008). The South African government has come up with initiatives to increase the number of PhD graduates, including women, as well as policies to redress past imbalances, and has set aside funds to ensure that women are given priority when it comes to these matters (NPC, 2012). These initiatives include the NRF PhD project, which is a government-funded initiative, but are not only limited to this. Other government initiatives include the government pumping monies into HEIs to accelerate the training and development of students and staff from the previously marginalised groups, and women academics have benefitted from these opportunities.

The government has also intervened through legislation − for instance, by making constitutional changes, promulgating the EEA, LRA, and HEA, as well as establishing institutions such as NRF, Assaf, and NDP, among others, in an attempt to redress past imbalances and to ensure that women are given preferential treatment where they were previously disadvantaged. The government, through these initiatives, has set targets for women's representation. These interventions have indeed proven useful to the career success of the previously marginalised groups, including women, although much still needs to be done to achieve set targets.

4.6.7 Activism

Activism refers to acting upon, acting against, and acting for causes of social concern, not only personal concern (Nair, 2004). Kiamba (2008) described how women's activism has changed the legal framework and instituted constitutional changes that

enabled women to be recognised. Even in South Africa, women's activism has impacted legislation changes, such as doing away with discriminatory practices in the workplace and treating everyone equally, regardless of gender. As already noted, despite the increase in the number of women entering HE as postgraduates and graduating internationally, women continue to fail to progress through the academic hierarchy in significant numbers, and to assume senior leadership positions. In 2012, in response to this situation, academics submitted a manifesto for change, to increase women's participation in HE leadership and research globally (Aiston & Jung, 2015). The impact of unionism in the liberation struggle in HE cannot be ignored, as well as its effect on the demographic profile of HEIs. The recent appointments of black women as VCs and to the levels below has been, to a certain extent, fuelled by political pressure.

4.6.8 A strong desire to succeed

Despite the lack of role models, mentors, and supportive organisational cultures, individuals with a high level of efficacy expectations are more likely to succeed than individuals with low self-efficacy, which then translates into anxiety. Self-efficacy is a motivational construct that has been shown to influence an individual's choice of activities, goal levels, persistence, and performance in a range of contexts (Zhao, Seibert & Hills, 2005). Self-efficacy theory is based on a model of triadic (cognitive, affective, biological) influences and ongoing reciprocal determinism, whereby the sources of efficacy information lead to the initial development of efficacy expectations, and also interact in a complex manner over time, in order to influence and shape both self-efficacy and performance (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Anxiety, according to this model, is a consequence of weak and low efficacy, but it can be part of the chain of causal influences − anxiety, influenced by low or weak efficacy, may subsequently undermine performance, as well as efficacy estimates (Betz & Hackett, 2006). According to social cognitive theory (SCT), an individual's sense of self-efficacy can be influenced through four processes: (a) enactive mastery, (b) role modelling and vicarious experience, (c) social persuasion, and (d) judgments of one's own physiological states, such as arousal and anxiety (Bandura, 1986). There is therefore a need to expose women to environments where their self-efficacy beliefs and expectations will be challenged beyond their obvious circumstances, and there is a need for successful women to

share their experiences, so that aspiring women can develop efficacy beliefs and expectations by referring to them as role models.

Hackett and Betz (1983) posited that while barriers such as societal beliefs and expectations contribute to an understanding of why women's choices and achievements have been limited, further investigation of the specific mechanisms by which these become manifested in women's vocational behaviour is needed. Such investigation would not only increase the understanding of women's career development but would facilitate the design of systematic programmes of intervention that are capable of increasing women's status and potential for achievement in the labour market. One potentially useful approach to the conceptualisation of women's vocational behaviour and, in particular, to an enhanced understanding of the relationships of socialisation experiences to subsequent choice and achievement behaviours, involves a focus on the cognitive processes mediating those behaviours.

4.6.9 Work-family integration and family support

The argument that women do not advance because they do not try is called the "ambition gap", which refers to the perceived propensity for women to choose family over work, or to shrink from opportunity (Lang, 2002). This argument has been discredited by *Catalyst*'s report entitled "The myth of the ideal worker: Does doing all the right things really get women ahead?" (Carter & Silva, 2011, p. 2). The study involved over 3,000 MBA graduates who stayed on a traditional career path and did not take leave for education, personal or family reasons. It summarised the myth that women did not ask for promotions in the following statement: "Women were more likely than men to ask for a variety of skill-building experiences, to proactively seek training opportunities, and to make achievements visible, including asking for feedback and promotions" (Carter & Silva, 2011, p. 11). These actions were not, however, reflected in their advancement. The men and women in the research group who actively pursued advancement achieved different results.

The significant contribution of family support towards ensuring the success of any individual in achieving their goals cannot be overemphasised. However, in women's studies, this is even more significant. The most important forms of family support are

spousal support, domestic helpers, and assistance from extended family (Ismail et al., 2005). Women with strong family support are better able to juggle work and family, as the support systems provide time off from domestic duties and allow them more time to focus on their studies and research.

Organisations such as HEIs must integrate work and family life by promoting flexible workplace policies that are honestly and effectively implemented, to address the specific career needs of women, such as giving them flexible job designs and specialised career path programmes (Stroh & Reilly, 1999). Some of the interventions that employers can introduce as support to women are the following: flexi-time and tele-working options, part-time working options, child care facilities, extended maternity leave, a mothers' room, and bathroom upgrades (Ibrahim, 2008). The other way in which organisations can accommodate women is by having policies that are against gender discrimination, in line with the legislative requirements in the country, such as the Constitution of the RSA and the EEA. Eagly and Carli (2007) termed gender discrimination an organisation-centred barrier, which will require organisational measures to address it.

4.6.10 Work centrality

The concept of work centrality refers to the degree of importance that work has in one's life (Paullay, Alliger & Stone-Romero, 1994). Studies amongst successful professionals stressed the significance of having career centrality (Ismail et al., 2005). Work centrality seems to be the universal feature of any successful individual, as it involves hard work, determination, persistence and career focus, without which no individual can succeed in what they are doing. There is a positive relationship between work centrality, work satisfaction, and organisational and work commitment (Herrbach, Mignonac, Vandenberghe & Negrini, 2009; Mannheim, 1993; Schmidt & Lee, 2008). This implies that women who value their work may be more likely to advance in their careers than women with low work centrality.

4.7 CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES OF WOMEN ACADEMICS

Greenhaus, et al. (2019) defined a career as a mobility path within a single organisation or multiple employers. They postulated that another approach to understanding what the term 'career' means is by viewing it as the property of an individual, rather than an occupation or organisation. Taking these varied interpretations into consideration within the context of this research, as explained in section 2.3.3.1 of chapter two, I define a career as a totality of work and leisure, a pattern of work and non-work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life, which may be characterised by consistency, late starts, transitions, breaks, learning and working, and focusing on other non-work-related activities, such as child-rearing and looking after elderly relatives.

Thus, a career trajectory begins at the point of entry into work practice, is built upon prior work experience, education, and expertise, and is influenced by numerous external and internal components (Oriol, Brannagan, Ferguson & Pearce, 2015). A career trajectory (or path) can move forward, backward, or remain static, depending on the amount of effort and planning that takes place along the way. Therefore, career development or advancement results from the recognition and reward of unique talents, competency, and professional growth (Oriol et al., 2015).

A successful career in academia requires a plan for development that supports both personal and professional goals, as explained in section 1.2.3 in chapter one. Due to economic, technological, and social changes, the dominance of the traditional, linear, organisation-driven career characterised by continuous, full-time employment with a single employer (Arthur, Khapova, & Widerom, 2005) has subsided, but not disappeared. It has, however, been supplemented by an increasingly diverse set of career patterns, of which the most frequently discussed is the boundary-less career (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996), which will be discussed in detail in section 5.6.2 of chapter five. In addition, a customised or kaleidoscope career (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006) will be discussed in section 5.6.4 of chapter five. The kaleidoscope career is conceptualised as another alternative to the traditional linear career (Kossek, Ollier-Malaterre, Lee, Hall & Pichler, 2011; Valcour, Bailyn & Quijada, 2007), which is shaped by individual choices made in response to personal and/or family

circumstances. Valcour et al. (2007), Sullivan and Baruch (2009), and Sullivan and Maniero (2018) identified three ways in which customised careers are different from traditional careers. Firstly, a customised career may depart from a full-time work schedule, such that employees work a reduced workload through part-time employment or job sharing. Secondly, a customised career may deviate from the assumption of continuous employment through delayed entry into the workforce, employment interruptions, or personalised approaches to retirement. Thirdly, a customised career may be based on relatively non-traditional relationships with employers, such as a temporary rather than permanent relationship, or a contractor/agency association rather than one of core employee. Moreover, the particular ways in which careers are customised are not necessarily permanent and can vary over the life course as individuals move through different phases of personal and family life, thereby making customisation a career concept rather than a feature of job design (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014).

Career development is therefore the lifelong process of shaping one's career, both psychologically and behaviourally, within the context of a society (Herr et al.,2004). Furthermore, career development accentuates individually developed needs and goals associated with the stages of life, and with tasks that affect career choices and job satisfaction. Again, career development does not take place in isolation from other life events and activities, and therefore, when studying women's career development, it is imperative that one studies their social contexts and life events as they unfold, as these play an integral role in career development. In the section below, I examine the different discourses that explain women in academia in different contexts.

4.7.1 Discourses that explain the career development trajectories of women academics

The basic premise of the discourse theory is that the way we think and talk about a subject influences and reflects the way we act in relation to that subject (Foucault, 1972, 1980; Hall, 1997; Phillips & Hardy, 2002). The problematic nature of Western-liberal discourses of power has been recognised by many, and diverse attempts at discourse intervention are emerging in response (Karlberg, 2005), which suggests that the overall project of discourse intervention is far from complete. Alternative discourses

of power need to be more clearly articulated. They also need to be more fully reconciled with the adversarial models of power that are necessary for critical social analysis, but insufficient as a normative framework for social practice (Karlberg, 2005). Within the context of career development trajectories, assuming linear models in the career development discourses of academic women would be a big mistake, and this will be discussed in more detail in chapter five.

Bagilhole and White (2013) explored the differences in career trajectories and experiences of a senior group of women academics and a younger group, who were between the early and mid-career stages. They reported that women in their late career stage face different challenges to those faced by women in their early career and mid-career stages. Bagilhole and White (2013) identified the following factors as influential to the career development of women: the influence of family of origin; the first generation of study at university; motivation from home and externally; geographical mobility; balancing work and family responsibilities; organisational cultures; the ability to challenge prevailing organisational cultures; strategic career planning; the availability of mentors; and understanding the rules of the game in the academic profession. This study will try to determine whether these findings are confirmed or rejected by women in South African HEIs.

In a study conducted by De la Rey (2002), five main factors were identified as governing women in academia, namely limited definitions of career and career development; women's multiple responsibilities; the changing constructions of academic work; masculinist institutional cultures; and the absence of a supportive network among women. According to De la Rey (2002), how we define 'career' is pivotal to understanding women academics' career trajectories. De la Rey (2002) referred to the four basic concepts of careers: steady state; linear; spiral; and transitory. She reinforced that women academics' career development trajectories are not linear all the time, due to childbearing, child-rearing and other domestic responsibilities, which means that women are unlikely to follow the anticipated pattern of uninterrupted service, much in line with Bimrose and Brown (2015), who posited that women's career trajectories are characterised by breaks, interruptions, late starts, disruptions due to their husbands' relocations, and other domestic responsibilities. In her research, De la Rey (2002) further reported that women professors have different career trajectories

compared to men, characterised by late beginnings and interruptions. This supports Riordan (2011), who postulated that women tend to formulate their long-term career goals much later than men do, which agrees with Kittrell (1998). She concluded that women's stories are intertwined with the stories of others, usually husbands and children. In addition, many married women reported fragmented educational and career patterns because of their husband's career movements (De la Rey, 2002).

It is therefore difficult for these women to make their mark in academia, even at retirement. A distinction should thus be made between chronological age and professional age, which is precisely why classical career age theories are under scrutiny within the South African context, as they do not talk to the realities that confront women in this context. This reality has implications for the retirement age of senior women academics, given that they leave the academy at the peak of their professional career, especially late starters, and sometimes there is no one, particularly other women, to replace their skills. Trajectories for women ultimately seem to be constructed differently than those for men. Several authors, such as Englund, Olofsson and Price (2018) and Kiesling (2006), mention socio-cultural, structural and institutional discourses as being responsible for the differences in men and women in academia in terms of career development. Unless there is a shift in how academia promote staff, women will continue to occupy lower positions in academia, since career advancement still favours masculine competencies. Obers (2014) emphasised that we either need to change the determining criteria for success, so that women's strengths, choices and priorities are equitably considered, or strategies must be put in place for women to enhance their research productivity.

In trying to find reasons for gender gaps in research productivity, Aiston and Jung (2015) conducted a study on gender and research productivity from an international perspective, by selecting five countries for analysis. These countries were Japan, China, Germany, USA and Finland. Their comparison was based on the following criteria: the proportion of women academics in the countries selected, their publication records, the marital status of women who have published, etc. Although the five countries selected are operating under different contexts, which means that their HE systems differ from a developmental perspective, the results of their study do provide significant input to the understanding of gender and research productivity. They

discovered, over a period of three years, that these women published less, and the findings were similar for women academics in Japan and the US. There was a more noticeable gap in output between senior men and women academics compared to the research output levels of academics occupying junior academic positions in all the countries. The gap was attributed to the hypothesis that junior women academics might be juggling domestic and work responsibilities, sometimes to the detriment of their research output (Aiston & Jung, 2015). Again, women in fields such as engineering and natural sciences had less favourable research outputs than their male counterparts. This was significant in all countries except the USA. Thus, this study actually confirmed the gender gaps in research output.

However, contrary to previous studies that have attributed these differences to family-work conflicts (Beddoes & Pawley, 2013; Raddon, 2010; Sax, Hagedorn, Arredondo & Dicrisi, 2002), where family is seen as having a negative impact on women's career development, Aiston and Jung (2005) found that, on average, married women were more productive than single academic women. The other interesting finding of their research was that women academics are less likely to be married, compared to their male counterparts. This finding supports previous findings by Baker (2012). Therefore, according to Aiston and Jung (2015), marriage is not operating as a form of negative equity with respect to research productivity. On the contrary, marriage or being in a relationship correlates positively with research productivity for academic men and women. Thus, marriage alone cannot be viewed as a factor responsible for low research productivity amongst women. In trying to understand the rationale behind the low research output amongst women, and the fact that not all women academics are married or have children, Aiston and Jung (2005) further investigated what they spent their time on, considering that those without husbands and/or children presumably have less juggling to manage. They found that women academics spent most of their time doing administrative work, especially junior women academics, and the teaching workloads of junior academics tend to be heavier than those of their senior counterparts. This confirms the findings of the study conducted by Barrett and Barrett (2011), who indicated that workloads disadvantage women more than men, and suggested that institutional policies on workloads could be beneficial to women.

Notwithstanding the facts above, Aiston and Jung's (2015) study also confirmed interruptions in the career development trajectories of women due to domestic responsibilities, such as child rearing and caring for the elderly. In Finland, the discourse of career breaks was common amongst both men and women, and this was attributed to the support provided by the Finnish state (Aiston & Jung, 2015). Consequently, research outputs were lower for both men and women, where there were career break periods. Concisely, Aiston and Jung (2015) emphasised that there are other possible explanations for the confirmed low research output by women academics, which should be sought and understood, other than the known family-related variables. Furthermore, for other women, family has contributed positively to their research output. This confirms what Hamovitch and Morgenstern (1977) found in their study of child-rearing and women academics' research productivity. They hypothesised that women with children attempt to do more with their limited time and spend time on other activities, particularly their free time. Again, for women academics who take career breaks for caring responsibilities, some use this time to focus particularly on research (Sax et al., 2002). Sax et al. (2002) stated that the impact of juggling work and family cannot be ignored, and that women who still manage to be productive, despite their family responsibilities, are clearly good at extending themselves.

However, there are clear barriers to the promotion of women, as discussed in section 4.6 above. Neale and White (2012), who studied academics in Australia and New Zealand, postulated his. Their study confirmed that women academics' career trajectories are impacted by lack of mobility due to family responsibilities and interrupted careers, and for those who meet requirements for promotion to senior academic positions, the transparency of promotion processes is questionable (Neale & White, 2012). Goransson (2011) attributed the slow progression of women academics to senior positions in HEIs in Australia to the male career model, as shown in the statistics, where women constitute only 21% of full professors, and 15% in New Zealand.

De la Rey (2002) postulated that men and women academics in their fifties tend to be at different places in terms of their career growth and development. Studies reveal that men who have uninterrupted, linear careers have a clear sense of their achievements, and want to make their mark. For women who have started late, many of them may have been in academia for only a decade or so by the time they reach their fifties (Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012).

4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter examined the challenges and contributing factors experienced by women in academia internationally, in the African context, and in South Africa, in relation to their career development. The chapter explained their discourses and identified the gaps in the literature in this regard.

In concluding this chapter, my view is that although the volume of literature on women and career progression in HE is increasing, there remains a paucity of research focusing on the career development experiences of women academics within the South African context. The existing career development theories were tested on different population samples with different backgrounds, using methodologies that are positivistic in nature, hence they remain decontextualised when transposed directly onto the South African context. This reality implies that there are missing voices in the literature on career development, which is a gap that this research seeks to fill. Expanding the voices that speak is crucial for expanding our theoretical knowledge about career development. Some of the traditional models and theories failed to consider the contextual factors that result in most South African women not following the same career structures that they proposed.

The aim of this research was therefore to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by adding some of the missing voices in career literature, focusing specifically on HE the sector with which I am more familiar.

What becomes obvious is that women from different backgrounds, national cultures, identities and communities cannot all fit neatly into one model or discourse of career development that was created elsewhere. I support my claims, through the evidence

presented in chapter five, regarding how the existing literature has failed to reflect the lived experiences of women in South Africa, as most studies in career research were adopted from the USA, which has a different context to that of South Africa, and which used different samples.

In the ensuing chapter, I present selected career development models and theories that I found relevant for this research and its objectives. I conclude by *advocating for an Afrocentric* approach, to contextualise career psychology.

CHAPTER FIVE
CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORIES AND MODELS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Career psychology has evolved over time to include different perspectives on how a career is defined and the key theories and models that form the phenomenon or dynamic of a career. It was useful for me to consider the most important career theories from a historical perspective, since this enabled me to distinguish traditional or classic career theory from feminist and more contemporary perspectives, which evolved in tandem with the requirements of the world of work.

This chapter aims to establish a theoretical understanding of the career development of women. The chapter therefore commences with a conceptualisation of career, career development and career theory as core constructs in this study in relation to women and their career trajectories. In the remainder of this chapter, I have categorised career theories into classic theories, feminist theories and contemporary theories

Following this conceptualisation, I first discuss the classic or traditional career theories, namely the age or stage theories of Super (1957) and Levinson (1978), followed by Holland's environment and personality fit career theory (1959), Bandura's social learning theory (1977), and Krumboltz's social learning theory of career counselling (1996). These theories have been fundamental to career psychology as a discipline and are widely supported by the community of career researchers and practitioners. However, these theories have also received criticism from different communities, including the feminist community. Classical theories that arose from the feminist movement of the previous century include Astin's (1984) socio-psychological model, Farmer's (1985) model of career and achievement motivation, and the models developed by Gottfredson (1981), and Hackett and Betz (1981), which are also discussed in this chapter. In response to these classical and feminist career theories, I reflect in this chapter on their applicability to women in the South African context. Lastly, contemporary and postmodern career development theories are examined, and

the chapter concludes by proposing an Afrocentric approach to the study of women's careers and career development.

5.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF CAREER AS A PROCESS INTEGRAL TO LIFE

In this section, I clarify the concepts of career, career development and career theory, which are fundamental to this study.

I regard a career as the pattern or sequence of work experiences that evolve over a lifetime, consistent with Arthur, Inkson and Pringle (1999) and Gysbers and More (1981). Greenhaus et al. (2019), in support of this view, further suggested that viewing a career as the evolution of work experiences over the life course implies that all individuals who are engaged in work-related activities have a career, thereby rejecting the unreasonably restrictive limitations that have historically connected a career with a high level of work commitment, professional status, rapid upward mobility, or stability in an occupation. Hall (2002), on the other hand, defined a career as a lifelong process of work-related activities that includes both objective and subjective aspects, whilst Super (1976) defined a career as the course of events constituting a life, including the constellation of roles played over the course of a lifetime (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2005). Herr, et al (2004) claimed that careers are (a) unique to each individual, (b) created by the person's choice and decision, (c) dynamic and unfold throughout one's life journey, (d) integrated entities of prevocational and post-vocational considerations, and (e) interrelated with one's other life roles in the areas of family, community and leisure, a definition which I find relevant to this research.

Furthermore, as already explained in section 4.8 of chapter four, Greenhaus et al. (2019) defined a career as a mobility path within a single organisation or with multiple employers. They viewed a career as the property of an individual, rather than an occupation or organisational responsibility. Consequently, as explained in section 2.3.3.1 of chapter two, I define a career as the totality of work and leisure, a pattern of work and non-work-related experiences that span the course of a person's life, which may be characterised by consistency, late starts, transitions, breaks, learning and working, and focusing on other non-work-related activities, such as child-rearing and

looking after elderly relatives. These factors should not be studied in isolation from the context wherein these careers are taking place.

Career development describes the lifelong process of shaping one's career, both psychologically and behaviourally, within the context of a society (Herr, et al., 2004). Greenhaus et al. (2019) described career development as an on-going series of stages characterised by unique concerns, themes and tasks. Zunker (2002, p. 9) referred to career development as "the total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic and chance factors that combine to influence the nature and significance of work in the total life span of any given individual". Thus, career development emphasises individually developed needs and goals associated with the stages of life, and with tasks that affect career choices and job satisfaction. Brown (2009) described career development as "a lifelong process involving psychological, sociological, educational, economic, physical and cultural factors, as well as chance factors that interact to influence the career of the individual". Therefore, there is consensus among various authors that career development is a process, and that it develops over time, possibly within more than one organisation. Again, career development does not take place in isolation from other life events and activities, hence when studying women's career development, it is imperative that one studies their social contexts and life events as they unfold, as these play an integral role in career development. For the purposes of this study, all these definitions are incorporated into the definition of career development.

Career development in this study analyses and synthesises the key aspects that one needs to consider when studying career development − for example, the fact that it is a long-term process, progressing through stages in life, with each stage having key needs, tasks, outcomes and influencing factors. Factors that influence one's career orientation, that is, how significant a career is and what is regarded as a success, determine job satisfaction. It is also important to note that careers happen within social contexts that include individuals' families, employers and national cultures (Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger & Schmidt, 2007). Therefore, understanding how careers evolve provides insights into the connections between individuals and the broader societies in which they live. An investigation of the contemporary career, that is, the career enacted in the twenty-first century, is particularly appropriate in light of considerable

changes in the economy, work organisations, and families over the past several decades have transformed careers in significant ways that are likely to continue for the foreseeable future (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014), hence the presentation of new age theories.

Various career theories have evolved over time, in which researchers have conceptualised career-related constructs, explained career development and developed models and frameworks to explain the dynamics of careers. In the remainder of this chapter, I categorise career theories into classic theories, feminist theories and contemporary theories, and summarise these theories in Figure 5.1 below.

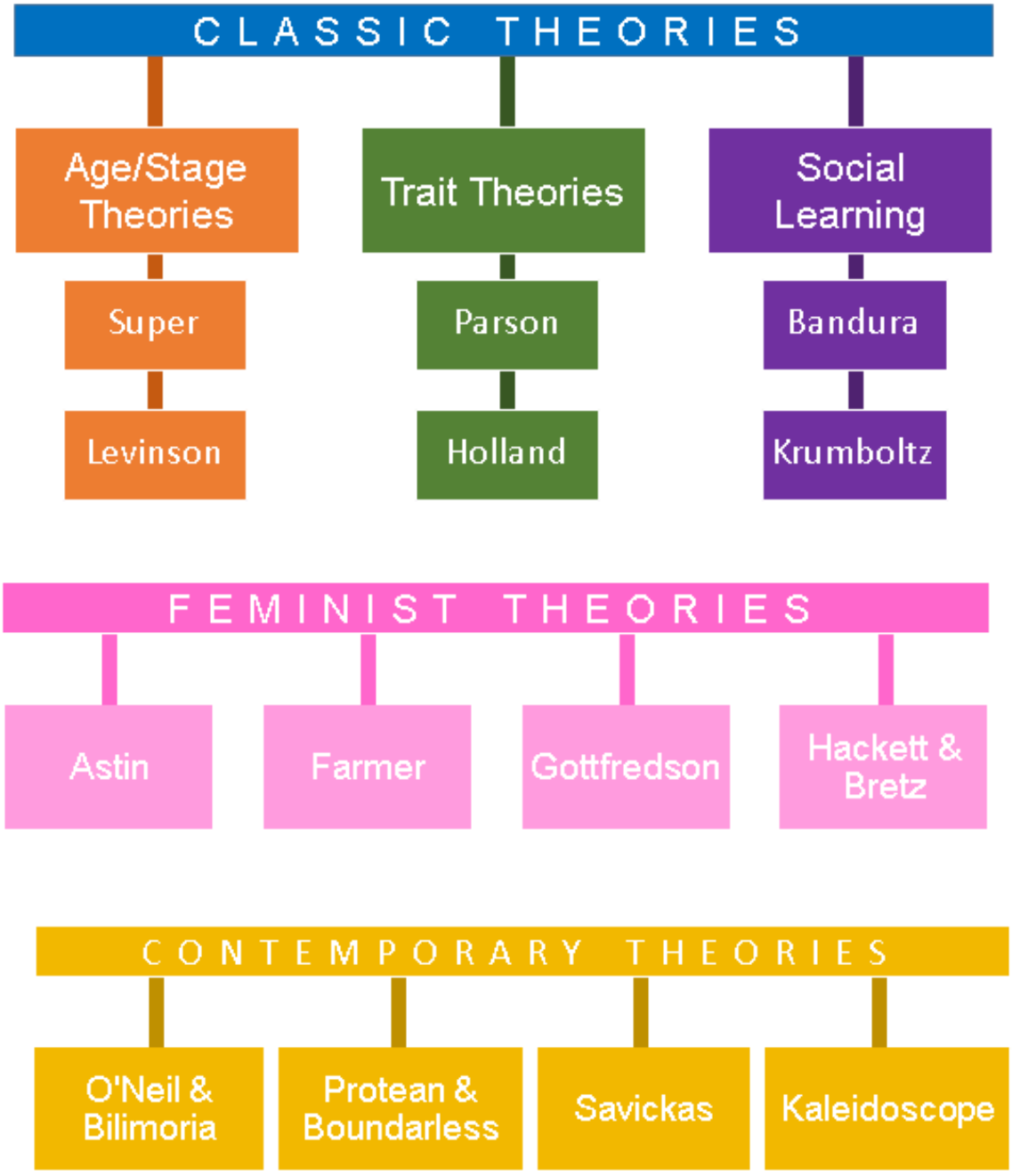

Figure 5.1: Career development theories and models

As shown in Figure 5.1, classical or traditional career theory, which established the discipline of career psychology, includes age/stage career theories, trait theories and theories of social learning. The age/trait theory of Super and Levinson describes career development through life stages and emphasises self-concept as the driving force in making career choices. In terms of trait theories, I then focus on Holland's theory, where women's personalities are matched with their work environments. At the centre

of trait theories, career choices are viewed as expressions and explosions of personality. This is followed by social learning theory, specifically that of Krumboltz, who looked at the impact of family, heredity, environment, learning experiences and task approach as key elements, as well as Bandura's self-efficacy theory.

In addition, I discuss a feminist critique of these career development theories, which includes the work of Astin, Framer, Gottfredson, Hackett and Betz. Astin's theory emphasises the effect of psychological and cultural environments on career choice and work behaviour. Farmer combined background factors, personal characteristics and environmental variables in an individual differences-type model, which attempted to predict career and achievement motivation. I then present Gottfredson's circumscription theory, which is viewed as an extension of Super's growth stage, as it also places self-concept at the centre of career choices. Lastly, I discuss Hackett and Betz's self-efficacy model, a career development theory of women based on the social learning theory of Bandura. The feminist critique is followed by a discussion of the contemporary or next generation career development theories focusing on women. These include O'Neil and Bilimoria's theory of the protean or boundaryless career, Savickas's theory of career construction, which is another extension of Super's theory, but focuses on life themes rather than stages and places an emphasis on career adaptability, and lastly, the kaleidoscope career model.

5.3 CLASSIC OR TRADITIONAL MODELS AND THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Together with the South African HE context discussed in detail in chapter one, life stages and career phases are crucial in setting the stage for the context of this research. The traditional career theories of Super and Levinson divide careers into distinct phases, each with its own peculiar challenges and tasks that require resolution (Riordan & Louw-Potgieter, 2011).

5.3.1 Super and Levinson age/stage career development theories

According to Erikson (1963), during the early career phase, young adults focus on establishing their careers, whilst simultaneously attending to intimacy versus isolation

issues. Super and Levinson emerged as the most popular in career stage research, and borrowed from Erikson (1963), Feldman (1976), Schein (1978) and Wanous' (1980) theories of human development, who all agreed that during the early career phase, young adults are faced with the task of managing multiple roles, namely work, family and community engagement. The common underlying assumption behind Super and Levinson's stage/age theories is that there are a series of predictable tasks that occur at more or less predictable times during the course of one's career (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

Super (1957, 1991) proposed a lifespan developmental model of career development, which focuses on self-concept. According to Super (1978), people develop in five stages, as depicted in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.3: *Super's five stages of a person's development*

Stage	**Age Group**
Growth	4 – 14
Exploration	15 – 24
Establishment	25 – 44
Maintenance	45 – 65
Disengagement	65+

A brief explanation of each stage is provided in relation to the self-concept, i.e. growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement. Between 15 and 24 years of age, an individual pass through a development stage to form, specify and implement vocational preferences (Super, 1957). Hall (1986) refers to this stage as an initial exploratory and trial activity in early adulthood, in which career-related information is gathered, hypotheses about the self are tested, career plans are made, and decisions are taken that will lead to a personally meaningful work life. As a result, individuals are theoretically expected to settle into a routine after a phase of career

exploration (Hodkinson, Sparkes & Hodkinson, 1996). According to Hodkinson et al. (1996) and Hodkinson and Sparkes (1997), routines can be (i) confirmatory (i.e. original choices and the path chosen become engrained), (ii) contradictory (i.e. consider a different career), (iii) accepting (of a career which was previously reluctantly chosen), (iv) dislocating (i.e. against one‘s identity but without being able to initiate a transformation), and (v) evolutionary (i.e. gradual changes without changes being contradictory or dislocating). This also implies that routines will change or be disrupted, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. In this context, Hall (1986) discusses turning points, which can be (i) structural (e.g. leaving school), (ii) incidental (i.e. outside one‘s control), or (iii) deliberate decisions (i.e. within a person‘s control) of varying duration. Despite the occurrence of turning points, people develop an individual career conception over time (Brousseau et al., 1996). According to Brousseau et al. (1996), one cannot differentiate between a linear, expert, spiral and transitory career concept. Super’s theory is considered one of the most holistic models of career development, as it takes the role of the environment in shaping individual self-concepts into account (Super, 1957). According to Super (1990), self-concept is a product of complex interactions amongst several factors, including physical and mental growth, personal experiences, and environmental characteristics and stimulation.

Levinson (1978), a psychologist, developed a comprehensive theory of adult development, referred to as the Seasons of Life theory, which identified stages and growth that occur well into the adult years. His belief was that adults follow a life structure or pattern that is comprised of one's social interactions, relationships, and work life. This life structure is constantly influenced by several stages of life. The two recurring seasons in life that Levinson highlighted were the Stable Period, or a time of consistency, when a person makes essential life decisions, and the Transitional Period, or the end of a certain life stage and the start of a new one (Levinson, 1978). Levinson identified seven specific stages of adult development in his theory of the seasons of life, as depicted in Table 5.2 below. These stages include the following:

Table 5.4*:* *Levinson's seven stages of adult development*

Stage	Age Group
Early Adult Transition	17 – 22
Entering the Adult World	22 – 28
Age 30 Transition	28 – 33
Settling Down	33 – 40
Mid-Life Transition	40 – 45
Entering Middle Adulthood	45 – 50
Late Adulthood	60+

Levinson and Super's theories have received a lot of criticism from feminists such as O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008), and White (2004). O'Neil et al. (2008) argued that the models developed by Levinson (1978) and Super (1980) assume a series of predictable tasks that occur at predictable times during one's career life. Levinson and Super's theories are criticised for proposing a linear progression through a series of life stages based on male patterns of behaviour (Doherty & Manfredi, 2010). Again, theorists have noted that these two theories were predominantly based on the career development experiences of men (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). These models emphasise individual achievement, continuous employment, and progression, while women's lives are characterised by breaks, starting late, and interrupted employment, due to the family-work balance and other individual factors.

Although Super's theory was originally hypothesised as linear, Super (1991) later considered the stages of career development to be potentially cyclical. Levinson, in view of the criticism that his theory received, conducted a similar study with women in 1987, and the findings were similar to those among men in the 1978 study. Contrary to the belief, that women's careers look different, with specific reference to women experiencing more constraints because of their family responsibilities and the way in which different aspects of their lives are necessarily more connected (O'Neil et al.,

2008), the findings reported similarities in the way that men and women progress through career stages.

Despite the contribution of Super and Levinson's theories to the field of career development, evidence in support of these theories has only been moderate. This is due to the paucity of research that directly tests these two models, and the limitations associated with career stage models (Smart, 1996). However, regardless of all the attention that has been given to these models, both of which are postulated to be applicable to women and men, almost none of the empirical investigations have identified women as the focus of the study (Ornstein & Isabella, 1990). This is problematic because of the questions raised regarding the generalisability and transferability of male career development models to women (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Fitzgerald & Betz, 1993). Literature reviews by Astin (1984), Betz and Fitzgerald (1987), and Gutek and Larwood (1987) highlight the differences between men and women on various career indices. Therefore, to continue to assume that female concerns are identical to those of males ignores the unique career psychology of women.

Super's theory presumed that there is an organic mechanism working behind the process of development and maturation. Recent articulations such as Herr, et al. (2004) and Savickas (2002) regarding Super's theory have called for a stronger emphasis on the effects of social context and the reciprocal influence between the person and the environment (Leung, 2004). Consequently, the view of a career as a linear equation, as suggested by traditional career paths, has become a myth rather than reality in today's society, where people change jobs much more frequently than in the past. Instead of a single occupational choice, career construction has become the norm, as will be discussed in section 5.6.3 on Savickas' theory, which is said to be an advancement of Super's theory.

5.3.2 Parson trait theory and Holland theory of person-environment fit

Holland's theory is built on the foundation of Parson's (1909) trait theory. The fundamental principle of Parson's theory is the concept of matching individuals and environments. Parson (1909) postulated that occupational decision-making occurs

when people have achieved an accurate understanding of their individual traits (aptitudes, interests and personal abilities), as well as a knowledge of jobs and the labour market. Thus, in making a career choice, an individual firstly does an assessment of his or her abilities, interests, and goals, and then analyses what a particular occupation requires and offers in return. Holland's thesis is based on Parsons' (1909) claim that there should be congruence between an individual's personality preferences and the working environment, and that this should lead to more satisfaction, success and stability in the individual's chosen career path. Holland's theory is therefore also categorised as the trait theory, with an emphasis on person-environment fit. Holland (1959) identified six personality types, namely: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional (RIASEC) (see Figure 5.2). Holland (1959) argued that people of the same personality type, working together in a job, create a work environment that fits their type, as depicted in Figure 5.2 below. For example, when artistic persons work together, they create a work environment that rewards creative thinking and behaviour, namely an artistic environment.

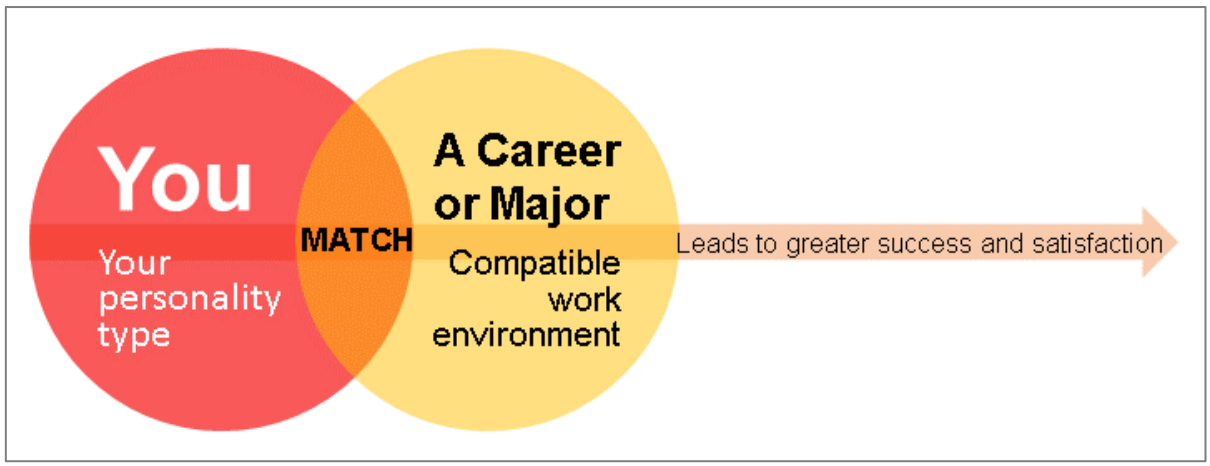

Figure 5.2: Holland's theory

Holland's theory presupposes that:

1. People search for environments where they can use their skills and abilities, and express their values and attitudes;
2. People who choose to work in an environment similar to their personality type are more likely to be successful and satisfied.

Holland (1959, 1966, 1973, 1984) suggested that vocational satisfaction, stability and achievement depend on the congruence between an individual's personality and the environment in which he or she works. Spokane (1985), in analysing Holland's thesis, made the following propositions:

(i) Congruent individuals will be reinforced, satisfied, and less likely to change environments than incongruent persons;
(ii) Incongruent individuals will be influenced by the dominant environment to change in the direction of congruence;
(iii) When placed in an incongruent environment, persons with consistent and differentiated personality patterns will be more likely to operate to make changes in the environment than inconsistent and undifferentiated persons. In other words, they will tend to either modify the environment or leave it.

Spokane (1985) stated that the first of these three propositions has been widely studied (congruence vs incongruence), but the remaining propositions have rarely been subjected to testing, thereby creating an area for future research. Spokane (1985) built on the work of Holland and suggested the following four basic premises of the person-environment fit:

(i) Individuals prefer environments that are conducive to the use of their abilities and skills set, and which permit the expression of their attitudes and values;
(ii) An individual's behaviour is a product of the interaction between environment and personality;
(iii) Reinforcing situations make behaviour more stable; and
(iv) In cases of an environment-personality mismatch, behavioural change is stimulated, to remove the state of incongruence. The options available are: searching for a different, more congruent work environment, or adjusting one's outlook and behaviour to fit the current environment (Spokane, 1985).

Holland (1959; 1966; 1973; 1984) developed a hexagonal model that shows the relationship between personality types and environments, as depicted in Figure 5.3 below.

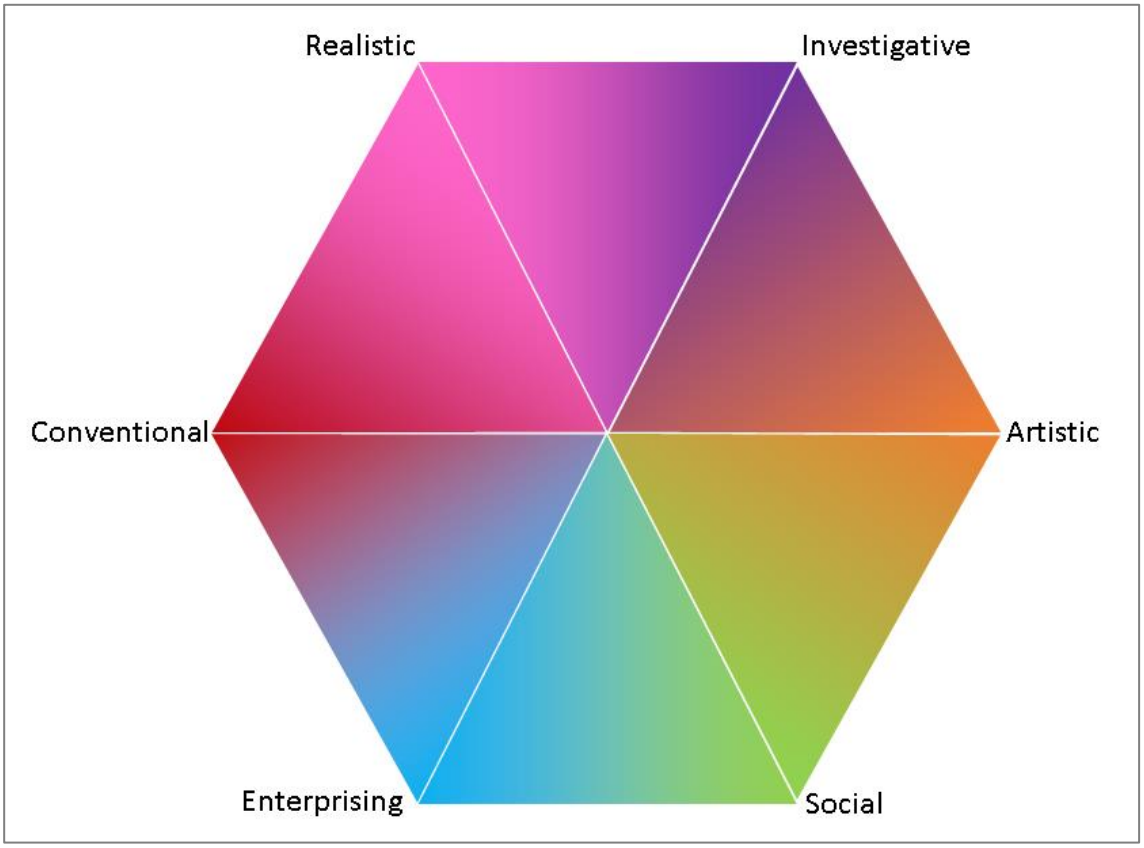

Figure 5.3: Holland's hexagonal model

In summary, Holland (1959, 1966, 1973, 1984) posited that most people, in reality, are a combination of types. Therefore, individuals will probably want to consider occupations in more than one category but are most likely to have a satisfying job if they choose an occupation that fits their personality type. Holland's theory is characterised by three elements, namely identification, differentiation and consistency.

Holland's theory has been criticised for assuming a 'one-size fits all' approach to career choice (Patton, 2013). It posits that knowledge of self and knowledge of the world of work are sufficient to facilitate the process of career choice (Patton & McMahon, 2014). Another criticism of Holland's theory is its failure to acknowledge the impact of gender role socialisation as a contributing factor to women's continued occupation of low level jobs (Patton, 2013). Betz (1994) emphasised the impact of early socialisation of girls into certain occupational fields, and how this has continued to influence their career choices and career development later in life. Fitzgerald and Weitzman (1992) pointed out that certain occupational environments were previously closed to women, particularly realistic and investigative environments, and women were mostly found in

clerical or service occupations. These authors also raised questions about the congruence between personality and environment, which can be compromised by other commitments, including family and financial security.

5.3.3 Bandura social learning theory

Bandura (1977) agreed with the behavioural learning theories of classical and operant conditioning, but took it a step further by suggesting that mediating processes emerge between stimuli and responses, and that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning. The social learning theory of career development (SLTCD) assists in explaining how individuals make occupational choices (Bandura, 1986). The SLTCD attributes occupational placement to countless numbers of learning experiences, some planned and some unplanned, that guide the way through the occupational maze (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Unlike other traditional career models, which aim to assist clients in deciding about a career path, the SLTCD welcomes indecisiveness as a practical approach to a complex and unpredictable future.

Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), refers to the confidence that individuals have in their ability to master specific tasks. The self-efficacy model derived from Bandura's (1977) social learning theory postulates that women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relation to many career-related behaviours, largely because of socialisation experiences. Therefore, they fail to fully realise their capabilities and talents in career pursuits (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Bandura's (1977) model aims to explain some of the processes involved in men and women's career pursuits, and their beliefs about achievement. The self-efficacy theory of Bandura (1977) postulates that individuals' self-efficacy beliefs come from four primary sources, namely: performance accomplishments; emotional arousal; vicarious learning and modelling; and verbal persuasion. According to the self-efficacy model, performance accomplishments have a greater influence on self-efficacy beliefs and describe an individual's successful completion of tasks (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Emotional arousal refers to the individual's affective state, and higher levels of anxiety yield lower self-efficacy expectations (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Vicarious learning and modelling can influence expectations of self-efficacy, in that observing someone else complete a task

successfully tends to raise the observer's self-efficacy level (Bandura, 1977, 1986). Verbal persuasion can positively influence self-efficacy beliefs, but it does not result in a lasting increase in an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1986). The individual must accomplish tasks, coupled with verbal persuasion, to develop a lasting sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1977) distinguished between outcome expectancy and efficacy expectancy. Outcome expectation refers to a person's estimation that a given behaviour will lead to particular outcomes. Efficacy expectation is an estimation that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to produce the desired outcomes (Bandura, 1977). Self-beliefs about abilities play a central role in the career decision-making process (Bandura, 1977). People move towards those occupations requiring the capabilities that they either think they have or can develop. People move away from those occupations requiring capabilities that they think they do not possess or cannot develop.

Personal goals also influence career behaviours in important ways (Bandura, 1978). Personal goals relate to one's determination to engage in certain activities to produce a particular outcome. Goals help to organise and guide behaviour over long periods. The relationship between goals, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations is complex and occurs within the framework of Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Model of Causality (Bandura, 1978). All these factors affect each other simultaneously, namely personal attributes, external environmental factors, and overt behaviour. In essence, a person's inputs (e.g. gender, race) interact with contextual factors (e.g. culture, family geography) and learning experiences to influence self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations, in turn, shape an individual's interests, goals, actions, and ultimately their attainments. However, these personal attributes are influenced by contextual factors (e.g. job opportunities, access to training opportunities, financial resources).

Bussey and Bandura (1999) posited that women do not necessarily have low self-efficacy, but that they are more efficacious in certain roles than men are. Women are more effective and efficient in traditional female occupations than they are in traditional male occupations. Bussey and Bandura (1999) continued to argue that women tend to

have lower self-efficacy in terms of their quantitative and technical abilities, which are traditionally male-oriented roles, than their more social and traditionally female-oriented roles. According to them, this reality determines women's occupational preferences.

Schein (2001) believed that women, like their male counterparts, have the ability to take on managerial roles and be successful. What threatens women's leadership or managerial self-efficacy is the lack of role models, the continued presence of gender stereotypes, and insufficient organisational support (Hackett & Betz, 1981; Sealy, 2010). Skinner (2012) added that women leaders/managers who work in male-dominated environments are more likely to have their self-efficacy challenged, as they may lack adequate experience and role models. However, with the right support and encouragement, women will be better able to utilise their individual capabilities and talents, and increase their levels of confidence, to become successful managers or leaders (Hackett & Betz, 1981).

Schyns and Sczesny (2010) conducted research on the underlying factors in the development of leadership self-efficacy, other than the main sources, such as performance accomplishment, feedback, vicarious experience or modelling, which were identified by Bandura (1977). Schyns and Sczesny (2010) discovered that there is a positive relationship between self-description and leadership self-efficacy. Their study was conducted among university students in Australia, Germany and India, which means that generalisation to other organisational settings, societies, and cultures may be a challenge. Bandura (1977) and Hackett and Betz (1981) investigated other factors responsible for the development of self-efficacy. They reported that the degree of job autonomy, availability of resources and a supportive organisational culture influence the development of self-efficacy. Trent (2003) conducted a study to investigate the factors responsible for the development of self-efficacy, and the reported findings were that task-specific feedback, reduced control and role ambiguity, encouragement of participation, and openness in decision making are all factors that contribute to the development of self-efficacy.

Mentoring, coaching and role modelling, together with positive feedback, therefore contribute to self-efficacy. The self-efficacy model demonstrates, however, that

providing opportunities, experiences and significant adults to enhance self-efficacy in children is vital. However, there is still a need to conduct further research on contextual and other underlying factors that may contribute to the development of self-efficacy of women academics in particular. Strategic career development interventions will positively impact young people in the context of self-efficacy.

5.3.4 Krumboltz social learning theory of career counselling

Krumboltz's theory attempted to explain how educational and occupational preferences and talents are acquired, and how the selection of career paths and work environments is determined. Diverse blends of, and interfaces between, genetic factors, environmental conditions, learning experiences, cognitive and emotional responses, and performance skills were cited as factors that influence the nature of the decision-making process, and yield different decisions over a period (Krumboltz, Mitchell & Rogers, 1976). According to Krumboltz et al. (1976), career indecision is a consequence of unsatisfactory or insufficient opportunities to acquire knowledge. Career counselling, as a process that provides career-relevant experiences and motivation for an individual to initiate exploratory activities, is thus considered to be essential.

Krumboltz's learning theory of career counselling (LTCC) states that learning takes place through observations, as well as through direct experiences (Krumboltz et al., 1976), in line with Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy. Krumboltz et al. (1976) highlighted factors that influence the nature of career decision-making, namely genetic endowments and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences, and task approach skills. Genetic endowments refer to inherited qualities that may set limits on individual career opportunities (Lent, Brown & Hackett, 1994). Environmental conditions and events are influential factors that are often beyond the individual's control (Lent et al., 1994). He mentioned that there are certain events and circumstances that influence skills development, activities, and career preferences. Learning experiences refer to instrumental learning experiences and associative learning experiences. Krumboltz et al. (1976) highlighted that there are both negative and positive reactions to learning experiences. Lastly, task approach skills refer to the sets of skills that the individual has developed, such as problem-solving skills, work

habits, mental sets, emotional responses, and cognitive responses. Krumboltz et al. (1976) stated that there is an interaction among the influencers. For instance, each individual, during the course of his or her life, is exposed to a number of learning experiences, which are followed by rewards or punishment (Krumboltz et al., 1976), and these experiences produce an array of unique experiences that contribute to the diversity and individuality of the human species.

Krumboltz, Mitchell and Levin (1999) came up with a planned happenstance theory that recognised the impact of chance life events on career decision making. This planned happenstance theory was an amendment to Krumboltz's (1996) social learning theory of counselling and development (SLTCD). The basic proposition remains the same, namely that individuals are born with different characteristics and predispositions. They grow up in an environment that provides innumerable unpredictable events, which offer opportunities for learning of both a positive and negative nature (Krumboltz et al., 1999). According to Krumboltz et al. (1999), unpredictable social factors, environmental conditions, and chance events over the life span should be recognised as essential influences on individual career decision making. They added that curiosity in exploring learning opportunities, persistence in dealing with obstacles, flexibility in learning to address a variety of circumstances and events, optimism when pursuing new opportunities, and risk taking are all necessary attributes during unexpected new events. Planned happenstance should not be confused with reliance on fate, as the term 'planned happenstance' expresses the concept that being open to serendipity can pave the way for new career paths and can alter career self-concepts (Krumboltz & Levin, 2004; Mitchell, Levin & Krumboltz, 1999).

A few scholars in the field of career development have recognised, to a certain degree, that chance events are present in career exploration (Bandura, 1982; Betsworth & Hansen, 1996; Cabral & Salomone, 1990; Hart, Rayner & Christensen, 1971; Miller, 2011, Scott & Hatalla, 1990). However, some believe that including chance events in a career counseling model is a complex and arduous undertaking. Scott and Hatalla (1990, p. 28) stated that "the thought of including chance factors such as unexpected personal events into the theory and practice of career counselling is disconcerting, because it is by its very definition, unpredictable and untidy."

The lessons learnt from Krumboltz's happenstance theory is that individuals develop barriers to actions resulting from past chance events, which means that they have difficulty taking positive actions or learning from the experience. According to Krumboltz et al. (1999), contrary to what we have been brought up to believe, what an individual should be when he/she grows up need not be planned in advance. Instead, career counsellors should emphasise the significance of individuals engaging in a variety of interesting and constructive activities, determining their reactions, remaining alert to alternative opportunities, and learning skills for succeeding in each new activity (Krumboltz et al., 1999).

5.4 FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S CAREER DEVELOPMENT

With classical theories having been criticised mainly for excluding women's voice and generalising about the white male experience, a few career models evolved that represent a female career perspective. In the 1980's, a movement of women vocational psychologists emerged, characterised by a feminist empiricist perspective, which began to construct models to explain women's career behaviour (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). Theories associated with women's career development, which emerged in the early 1980's, included those developed by Astin (1984), Farmer (1985), Gottfredson (1981), and Hackett and Betz (1981). These theories enhanced earlier theories, by considering the factors that influence women's career choices, aspirations, and work behaviours. These theories will be discussed in the sections below.

5.4.1 Astin psycho-sociological model

Astin (1984) incorporated sociological and psychological factors, by emphasising the effect of psychological and cultural environments on career choice and work behaviour. Astin's model includes four interrelated factors: motivation; work expectations; socialisation, and structure of opportunity. Astin (1984) stressed that her theory is applicable to both women and men. She postulated that work behaviour is primarily motivated by the desires for survival, pleasure, and contribution, while expectations are concerned with the ease of access to various occupations, as well as their comparative ability to satisfy the three basic desires.

However, Fitzgerald and Betz (1983) criticised Astin's theory from a technical and philosophical perspective. They noted, however, her contribution of including real world circumstances, such as structure of opportunity and perceptions of occupational access. Fitzgerald, Fassinger and Betz (1995) observed that difficulties in operationalising constructs as broad and general as structure of opportunity may account for the limited impact of Astin's theory. A subsequent study conducted by Poole, Langan-Fox, Ciavarella and Omodei (1991) confirmed the findings of Fitzgerald et al. (1995).

5.4.2 Farmer theory of career motivation

The multi-dimensional model of Farmer (1985) combined background factors, personal characteristics and environmental variables in an individual differences-type model, which attempts to predict career and achievement motivation (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). Farmer (1985) was influenced by the social learning theory of Bandura (1977), which maintained that psychological functioning involves continuous, reciprocal interaction between behavioural, cognitive and environmental factors (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996). Farmer (1985) contended that changes in society's attitude towards working women might lead to changes in men and women's achievement in the future (Hoi & Hiebert, 2005).

Achievement and career motivation in women may be inhibited by poorly defined factors, such as a low level of academic self-confidence, fear of success, vicarious achievement motivation, home-career conflict, myths about women and the world of work, low risk-taking behaviour, and sex-role orientation (Farmer, 1976, 1985). Considering these research findings, counsellor interventions that include exposing girls to non-traditional role models, helping parents and teachers reduce their sex-stereotypic behaviour, non-biased career information, and the adoption of neutral attitudes toward sex roles are suggested (Farmer, 1976, 1985).

The most salient features of the career development of women seem to be the role conflict and confusion experienced in terms of the roles of mother, wife or partner, and worker. Work-family balance is thus a significant factor, given the increase in the number of women employed in today's world. Many women find themselves in a

situation where they not only work on a full-time basis, but are also primarily responsible for child-rearing, as well as maintaining the home and family life. Fitzgerald and Betz (1983) and Swanson and Tokar (1991), in addressing career-related barriers to women and men's career development, discovered that individuals bring attitudinal and self-concept factors, as well as environmental constraints, to their career aspirations. They mentioned that, in many cases, little is known about the compromises that individuals have to make as a result of these barriers, and how they cope with such compromises. Swanson and Tokar (1991) recommended future research to determine how the perception of barriers affects career-related behaviour and other career development variables, such as decision-making skills.

5.4.3 Gottfredson circumscription theory

The model developed by Gottfredson (1981) incorporated several elements from earlier theories, namely self-concept, developmental stages, and the match between individuals and occupations (Hoi & Hiebert, 2005). Gottfredson (1981) expanded on Super's (1957, 1980) idea that individuals seek jobs that are compatible with their self-concept. She suggested that a multi-faceted self-concept, influenced by variables such as gender, social class, and intelligence, plays a significant role in predicting occupational aspirations and career choices. Gottfredson's (1981) theory argues that Super's (1957; 1980) theory addresses some aspects of these, whereas her theory attempts to integrate all aspects (Hackett, Lent & Greenhaus, 1991), which suggests Gottfredson (1981) expanded on Super's (1957; 1980) theory whilst making a new contribution, on the aspects not covered in Super's theory.

Gottfredson's (1981) model addresses women's career development in two different ways. Firstly, it discusses how individuals reach a compromise when they face conflicting goals. This theory examines the fact that men and women tend to differ in their occupational aspirations. It also provides a developmental and sociological perspective of career development and focuses primarily on the career development process as it relates to the types of compromises that people make.

It is contended that Gottfredson's (1981) developmental theory provides one of the most effective frameworks for examining career-related barriers (Luzzo, 1996). In

terms of this theory, there are two salient points concerning career barriers. Firstly, Gottfredson suggested that when individuals identify and confront their career-related barriers, this will cause them to compromise their vocational goals. Luzzo (1996) suggested that as barriers are recognised, confidence may be affected, and other career-related variables may be compromised. Secondly, Gottfredson suggested that it is the interaction between the internal barriers (self-concept) and external barriers (perceived accessibility) that directly influences career-related variables. In this regard, Luzzo (1996) and Swanson and Tokar (1991a, 1991b) indicated that the perception of career-related barriers does not need to be viewed as negative for the individual, and that some individuals may view barriers as challenging, rather than defeating.

5.4.4 Hackett and Betz self-efficacy model

This approach to the conceptualisation and facilitation of women's career development is based on the social learning theory of self- efficacy (Bandura, 1977), which aims to explain some of the processes involved in men and women's career pursuits, and their beliefs about achievement.

Betz and Hackett (1981) and Bandura (1986) examined self-efficacy within the context of career decision-making and speculated that the construct of self-efficacy could be used to offer insight into women's career development. They tested their hypothesis, and the results of their study suggested that individuals with low self-efficacy perceptions towards non-traditional occupations for their gender were less likely to consider such occupations as potential career choices (Betz & Hackett, 1981). They coined the term 'career decision making efficacy', which refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to complete tasks necessary to make career decisions.

Betz and Hackett's (1981) model postulates that largely because of socialisation experiences, women lack strong expectations of personal efficacy in relation to many career-related behaviours, and therefore fail to fully realise their capabilities and talents in their career pursuits. Betz and Hackett (1981) stated that because of this, women are less likely than men to pursue their own career paths, and relatively few women have successful role models.

Whereas low self-efficacy expectations unquestionably affect the career behaviour of both women and men, the limited and disadvantaged position of women in the labour force, and the limited range of career options from which most women can choose, may be due, at least in part, to differences in expectations of self-efficacy among women and men. This suggests the lack of behaviours that will facilitate women's career pursuits and achievements, in accordance with their individual capabilities and talents. This is believed to be due to the lack of strong expectations of personal efficacy related to career-related behaviours among women. From this perspective, low or weak expectations of self-efficacy are viewed as the main means by which internal barriers to women (Harmon, 1977) are manifested in career-related behaviours. External barriers to women, such as discrimination, sexual harassment and lack of support systems, represent obstacles that require strong self-efficacy expectations to overcome. Thus, self-efficacy theory is considered relevant to the conceptualisation and modification of internal barriers, as well as to the management of external barriers. Harmon (1977) and O'Leary (1997) suggested that women's career development is influenced by both internal/psychological and external/sociological constraints. Consequently, the influence of family roles and their associated expectations on women's career development can never be taken for granted. Although the relationship between marriage, motherhood and simple workforce participation has lessened over the years, such factors are still strongly related to career attainment, innovation and commitment, and continue to represent the major factors that differentiate women's vocational behaviour from that of men (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996).

5.5 APPLICABILITY OF TRADITIONAL THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT TO WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The accuracy of traditional career development theories and their applicability to the South African context have been widely questioned (Chinyamurindi, 2012), as most of these theories are based almost exclusively on studies of male subjects (Erikson, 1968; Levinson, 1978; Schein, 1978).

In the past, critiques came from feminist thinkers, who applied new ideas and political perspectives to the established norms in career research, noting the marginalised lives of women, who often faced challenges in gaining access to the workplace and doing

dignified work (Barnett & Hyde, 2001, Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987, Brown, 2009). This is possibly due to researchers implicitly agreeing with the charge that women were simply casual workers who entered the workforce, but only until they got married and had children.

Another explanation for the non-acceptance of these theories within the South African context is the methodologies that were employed to arrive at the findings. Most of these studies employed quantitative surveys (Creed, Patton & Watson, 2002; Stead & Watson, 2017), and the quantitative approach is fraught with limitations, such as sampling. Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2011) maintained that the career development theories developed elsewhere cannot be transposed directly onto the South African situation. This status quo remained until African feminism recently challenged it. Methodologies such as psychometric tests were criticised for being culture-bound, and thus inappropriate for people from different cultural backgrounds (Reynolds & Suzuki, 2013). Furthermore, using tests in the quest for objective data has resulted in fixed, linear and stable models (Maree & Beck, 2004), which are not appropriate for the African woman and her challenges. Maree and Beck (2004) contended that the accepted linear career models are based on the archetypal male principle, symbolised by an arrow, whilst a spiral, with its allusion of the ebb and flow of life, represents the corresponding female principle. These female perceptions and expectations challenge many of the conventional assumptions that have been made about career development.

From an epistemological perspective, general critiques of existing career theory, including the discourse about women and careers, have emerged from social constructionism (Burr, 2003; Gergen, 2009). The hallmark of these critiques is the questioning of existing theories and their underlying assumptions, and thus the extant literature. The social constructionist critique encourages a more relativistic understanding of knowledge, which acknowledges the assumptions that shape the enquiry and the influence of culture. Social constructionist perspectives seek to unpack how knowledge is constructed, by taking the social and political discourses that frame how questions are asked and answered into account (Blustein, Schultheiss & Flum, 2004).

Socialisation is another factor that has affected the career development of South African women (Phinney, Ong & Madden, 2000; Shapiro & Sax, 2011). From birth, children are socialised to conform to their feminine or masculine roles. This process defines the behaviours that are acceptable for boys and girls, shaping their experiences and subsequently developing their self-perceived competencies, values, and aspirations (Eccles, 1986). The socialisation that occurs during schooling, especially in the adolescent years, generates differential learning experiences, which may be relevant to the career choices of girls and underrepresented groups. Bandura's self-efficacy approach assumes that all students' career self-efficacy is shaped by prior achievements, as well as messages from family, peers, teachers, and other social institutions. According to Eccles and Jacobs' (1986) parent socialization model, parents' gendered ability and value beliefs influence girls' and boys' interpretations of those beliefs, and hence students' domain-specific valuing of tasks and competence beliefs and subsequent career plans. They further discovered that teachers' attitudes also have a strong influence on students' perceptions of their own abilities and can lead to students endorsing negative gender stereotypes. Therefore, parents and teachers' gender stereotypes, beliefs, and expectations regarding children's aptitude affect students' subsequent attitudes and achievement patterns, which perpetuate gender-stereotypical roles (Eccles & Jacobs, 1986). A large majority of African households were impacted by the socialisation process which discouraged girls from going to school and pursuing a career, instead girls were taught to value their expected roles as caregivers (Eccles & Jacobs, 1986). Sadly, this history provides an explanation for women's career development and choices of the time, although women today have a choice of careers. Thus, in seeking to understand the history of career development of women, and the current capacity challenges, we cannot ignore the historical background of South African society. The emergence of women in the corporate space and in academia in particular has thus provided role models in South African communities, that were previously disadvantaged by the socialisation process. African feminism, a feminist epistemology that validates the experiences of women of African origin against a mainstream feminist discourse (Goredema, 2009), highlights the discernible difference between women who were colonised and those who were deemed the colonisers. The more the parents' perception is targeted and improved, the better the parenting, which affects the attitude of the children towards development in general, including career choices. Philosophies such as feminist epistemology that

put women at the centre are aimed at altering such attitudes, so that different narratives are told about women. There is a need to move away from generalisations about women's career development (Brooks, 2006), and acknowledging that women are not homogenous. To achieve this end, women's histories, present realities, and future aspirations should be studied carefully, with the intention of changing the status of women for the better.

5.6 CONTEMPORARY THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The shortcomings of the western models and frameworks to mirror the lived experiences of African women has led contemporary female researchers to develop context-specific models that can give authentic expression and representation to women (Bostock, 2014; Gallos, 1989; O'Neil, Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005; Ogbogu & Bisiriyu, 2012; O'Leary, 1997; White, 1995). Feminist critiques, such as Blustein, McWhirter and Perry (2005), and Patton and McMahon (2014), have posed a similar question regarding the relevance and adequacy of existing career development models and theories for confronting a world where the oppression and marginalisation of women is the norm.

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) came up with a career development theory for women, which is discussed below due to its relevance to this study. Thereafter, I take a closer look at the Protean and Boundaryless career models, as well as the model of Savickas, and conclude with the kaleidoscope career model.

5.6.1 Women's career development and success orientation: O'neil and Bilimoria

O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) found that women's career and life responsibilities ebb and flow according to life stage concerns, and that these must be factored into organisational models of successful careers, in addition to work-related concerns. The results of their research show that women's careers develop in three distinct age-related phases, which are characterised by differences in career pattern, focus, context, and beliefs. The authors proposed that women's careers fall into three age-related phases: idealistic achievement (24-35 years), pragmatic endurance (36-45

years), and re-inventive contribution (46-60 years) (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). In each of these stages, the concept of career success is uniquely experienced and defined by women.

Women in the *idealistic achievement phase* perceive themselves as being in charge of their careers and are undoubtedly hands-on in taking planned steps to ensure their career success. They have an internal locus of control, are achievement-oriented, self-driven and motivated to succeed, and view their careers as opportunities to make a difference, as well as trajectories to personal happiness and fulfilment. They believe that their futures provide unlimited opportunities and view their careers as chances to realise their dreams.

Women in the *pragmatic endurance career phase* perceive their careers as extensions of themselves, and their identities are inseparable from what they do for a living. Essentially, their view of a career is related to their career definitions of achievement and accomplishment − if careers are seen as essential parts of themselves, it becomes more critical to succeed in them. Women in this career phase define success as personal happiness and fulfillment, but do not perceive their careers as the only vehicle to achieve that end. Some feel a need to protect themselves at work and feel stuck in their current jobs, organisations, fields or industries.

Women in the *reinventive contribution phase* have experienced their personal lives being subsumed by their professional lives at some point during their careers. In his study, Hewlett (2002) discovered that women who are high achievers frequently have to make a sacrifice, such as deciding not to have children, in order to meet the demands made on them in advancing in their careers. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) further noted that many women in the reinventive contribution phase may either be divorced or have experienced the death of a spouse, which may have initiated a renewed focus on work and career concerns. Then, as they have advanced further in their careers, these women reconceptualise and reclaim their careers lives as opportunities to contribute to and be of service to others, without losing sight of themselves in the process.

Other contemporary theorists, such as Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012), who explained career development from women's perspectives, factored in the broader social or psychological context. Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012) asserted that women in Nigeria are entering academia in their 50's. O'Neil et al. (2008) and O'Leary (1997) further hypothesised that unless there is a shift, women will continue to occupy fewer positions in academia, as long as the determinants of career advancement continue to favour masculine competencies. Obers (2014) stated that we need to change the criteria for success, to equally consider women's strengths, choices and priorities. Alternatively, strategies need to be put in place for women to develop their research capabilities.

All these contemporary theories attempted to understand and explain career development from women's perspectives, and to place career development and career success in a broader social or psychological context. They agree that women's careers and lives are more holistic, and that women measure success less by corporate advancement, and more by subjective measures such as personal satisfaction and growth (Sturges, 1999; Obers, 2014). Feelings of accomplishment, personal achievement and receiving personal recognition, rather than material rewards, are more important to women, whereas for men, career success is described as a competitive game where increased status and material gain are the ultimate goal (Obers, 2014).

5.6.2 Protean and boundaryless career models

Two new views on careers have emerged over the last decade within the organisational literature − the protean and the boundaryless career (Briscoe, Hall & Frautschy de Muth, 2006). Hall (1996) espoused the protean career concept as the career of the 21st century. Hall (1996) defined a protean career as one in which a person reinvents a career that is driven by the individual, not the organisation. In addition, this reinvention occurs whenever the person and the environment change. The boundaryless career focuses on crossing both objective and subjective dimensions of the career at multiple levels of analysis, including organisational position, mobility, flexibility, the work environment, and the opportunity structure, while at the same time de-emphasising reliance on organisational promotion and career paths (Arthur, 1994).

Inherent to the notion of protean careers is that the individual employee is primarily responsible for managing his or her career, and that a strong sense of identity and values are important for guiding career decisions (Briscoe et al., 2006; Hall, 2002). Furthermore, psychological success is believed to result from individual career management, as opposed to career development, which is initiated by the organisation. Hall (1996) stated that a protean career involves greater mobility, a more whole-life perspective, and developmental progression. Briscoe and Hall (2002) added that a protean career model is both a values-driven attitude and a self-directed attitude towards career management.

The most central characteristic of the protean career is that it is a reflection and manifestation of the individual career actor (Baruch, 2004; Greenhaus & Callanan, 2006 & Hall, 1996). An individual who is protean is considered to put self-fulfilment and psychological success above concerns and norms that would have their source outside of the individual (Briscoe & Hall, 2002). Psychological success is considered to be subjective success on the person's own terms, in contrast to objective success, which might be measured or defined externally − for example, by salary or promotions (Briscoe, 2006).

Boundaryless careers, on the other hand, are not bound or tied to a single organisation, and are not represented by an orderly sequence (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Briscoe, 2006; Sullivan & Arthur, 2006). They are manifested by less vertical coordination and stability (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996). A person with a boundaryless career mindset navigates the changing work landscape by enacting a career characterised by different levels of physical and psychological movements (Briscoe et al., 2006).

De Vos and Soens (2008) revealed that after receiving career counselling, those individuals with a protean career attitude reported higher levels of career satisfaction and perceived employability, and that this mindset is mediated by the development of career insight. Although their study addressed the impact of a protean career attitude in a very specific sample, the results support the idea that having a protean career attitude is important for individuals in the present-day career landscape.

5.6.3 Savickas career construction theory

Savickas (2002) attempted to expand and contextualise Super's theory into what he calls career construction theory. In terms of Savickas' (2002) career construction theory, an individual's career development is based more on adaptation to his or her changing context than on the maturity of prescribed behaviours. Thus, careers are constructed, and in this regard, Savickas (2002) preferred the term career adaptability, as opposed to career maturity, which is the term used by Super. Savickas replaced the maintenance stage with the management stage, as the latter term suggests continuous adaptation. Savickas (2002) built on Super's notion of self-concept, which originated from personal construct theory. However, he adopted a constructivist perspective. Using social constructionism as a metatheory, construction theory views careers from a contextual perspective that sees people as self-organising, self-regulating, and self-defining (Savickas, 2005). Counting on its social constructionist epistemology, the career construction theory reconceptualises Holland's vocational personality types (RIASEC) and vocational tasks. It understands personality types as processes that have possibilities, not realities, that forecast the future. It understands developmental tasks as social expectations. Career construction theory then uses the concept of life themes to integrate its conceptualisations of vocational personality and career adaptability into a comprehensive theory of both vocational behaviour and career counselling. Stated concisely, the theory grasps that individuals construct their careers by using life themes to integrate the self-organisation of personality and the self-extension of career adaptation into a self-defining whole that stimulates work, directs occupational choice, and shapes vocational adjustment.

5.6.4 Kaleidoscope career development model

Mainiero and Sullivan (2006) discovered that in comparison to men, women's career histories are relational, as they are entrenched in women's bigger life contexts. They maintained that women's career decisions are typically part of a larger and more complicated web of interrelated issues. According to Sullivan and Mainiero (2008), women face different issues and life tasks, depending on their career or life stage. This resonates with O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005), who came up with different career stages with unique opportunities and challenges at each stage, as already explained in section

5.6.2 above. Women in their mid-career stage, for example, are said to have more challenges advancing in their careers because of the caretaker role of child-bearing, compared to women in the late career and life stage (McFadden & Swan, 2012). However, regardless of which career or life stage women are in, Sullivan and Mainiero (2007) agreed that women face unique challenges compared to their male counterparts in their career development trajectories across industries and countries. Several barriers, as already discussed in section 4.6 of chapter four, inhibit the career progress of women more than they do for men.

Even though protean (Hall, 2004), boundaryless (Sullivan & Arthur, 2006) and kaleidoscope (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006) careers have been suggested as the emerging career patterns of the future, contemporary organisational career trajectories paradoxically remain largely defined by traditional dimensions of length of service, geographic mobility, and progression up the organisational ladder (McDonald, Brown & Bradley, 2005). The linear hierarchical path of the traditional career, symbolised by vertical trajectory, climbing the corporate pyramid and monetary, power and status rewards, lingers on.

Furthermore, since the traditional models and theories presented were criticised for excluding some voices and generalising about the white male experience, there are, unfortunately, only a few models that represent the voice of women. Progress in understanding cultural and ethnic influences on career development has been slow, which means that there is a paucity of theoretical models in this area, a gap that this research seeks to fill. Considering the uniqueness and diversity of the South African culture, and the differences in women's backgrounds, it is impossible to have one career theory that explains the career development of women in South Africa. Investigating and understanding the everyday world of women's experiences is paramount to feminism and feminist research (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Stanley and Wise (1993) reflected the prevailing view of feminists, when they contended that what is needed is a "woman's language", a language of experience, which must come from exploring their personal, every day, lived experiences.

A proposed Afrocentric approach to career development, as an alternative to the traditional models, is discussed below.

5.7 ADVOCATING FOR AN AFROCENTRIC /INDIGENOUS APPROACH TO THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

The feminist critique of social science is that women's lives have been studied from a positivist, patriarchal paradigm, which has no existential connection to the personal (Garko & Florida, 1999). It is argued that different approaches will enhance our understanding, and that research methods reflecting broader philosophical orientations will be more appropriate for previously excluded voices, such as African women (O'Neil, Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008; Bimrose, McMahon & Watson, 2017). African feminism is a social movement whose aim is to increase the global consciousness that sympathises with African women's histories, present realities and future expectations. A story of feminist voices calls for openness and the use of descriptive methods to explore women's experiences. Garko (1999) stated that the reason for choosing descriptive methods is that they allow women to tell their stories in their own voices. In storytelling, individuals locate themselves as the primary narrator and character of their stories, and in this way, identity is constructed (McMahon, Watson & Bimrose, 2010). Feminist critiques challenge what is taken for granted and strive towards the acknowledgement of positioned knowledge and experiences. In addition, feminist critiques have given useful insights into the limitations of existing career theory, by coming up with different theories in different contexts, using methodologies understood by the communities themselves. Feminist scholars (Alcoff, 1991; Carby, 1987; Eagly, 1987; Gilligan, 1982) have emphasised the importance of acknowledging women's voices, and the danger of the privileged speaking on behalf of the oppressed. Alcoff (1991) indicated that not only is location epistemologically salient, but certain privileged locations are discursively dangerous, referring particularly to privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons. Alcoff (1991) stated that this has helped to increase or reinforce the oppression of the group that is spoken for. For this reason, the act of the privileged speaking on behalf of the oppressed has been increasingly criticised by members of the oppressed groups. Carby (1987, p. 6) posited that to gain a public voice as orators, black women had to confront the dominant domestic ideologies and literary conventions of womanhood, which excluded them from the definition of a woman. According to her, there is a need to revisit the black feminist theory, and black women themselves need to reconstruct their definition of womanhood. Indigenous psychology is therefore

considered appropriate for studying the career development of African women, because it gives a voice to samples that would otherwise have been neglected. Secondly, it provides a contextual understanding, unlike the quantitative approach, which is prescriptive in nature and aims to match people with careers (Chinyamurindi, 2012).

Our understanding of career development could thus be enhanced by using indigenous research, as it investigates the real-life context and concerns itself with vivid, dense, and full descriptions of the phenomenon being studied (Chilisa, 2012). Kim and Berry (1993, p. 2) defined indigenous psychology as "the scientific study of human behaviour or mind that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that is designed for its people". Indigenous psychology advocates the examination of the knowledge, skills, and beliefs that people have about themselves, and the study of these aspects in their natural contexts. Theories, concepts, and methods are developed to correspond with psychological phenomena. It advocates the explicit examination of the content and context of research. The goal is to create a more rigorous, systematic, and universal science that can be theoretically and empirically verified.

Postcolonial indigenous research advocates a process of decolonising and indigenising Euro-Western research methodologies (Chilisa, 2012). Indigenisation is a process that involves a critique of and resistance to the imperialism and hegemony of Euro-Western methodologies, and the call for adapting conventional methodologies by including perspectives and methods that draw from the indigenous knowledge, languages, metaphors, worldviews, experiences and philosophies of the former colonised, historically oppressed, and marginalised social groups (Chilisa, 2012). The challenge for indigenous researchers lies in the integration of indigenous perspectives into the major paradigms, because of the underlying epistemologies, ontologies, methodologies and axiologies of such paradigms (Wilson, 2008). Perspectives from Africa share a common understanding of an indigenous research paradigm informed by relational ontology, epistemology and axiology (Chilisa, 2012). Constructivism takes the ontology of a fluid reality one step further, in the belief that there is not only one fluid reality, but many realities specific to the people and locations that hold them. The interaction between the investigator and the subjects is the key to this epistemology,

with reality being made up of socially constructed concepts that are shared (Wilson, 2008, p. 37).

Afrocentricity is thus the worldview that places African ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing, and value systems on an equal footing with other scholarly examinations of human experience. Afrocentric methodologies require researchers to develop relationships with the research subjects, and reaffirm those relationships using methods that are not conventionally used with Western populations. This approach is collaborative, allowing the community to participate and provide input during all stages of the research process (Baugh & Guion, 2006).

5.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the different theories and models of career development and analysed their applicability to the South African context. None of the theories discussed propose to explain the entirety of career development, but each seeks to address what their authors see as the most salient factors. However, there is consensus amongst the contemporary career theorists that women's careers are constructed differently to those of men, and therefore this research is worthwhile, as it pays attention to how women's career trajectories are constructed. Again, I highlighted that feminist critiques are against studying women's lives from a positivist, patriarchal paradigm, without the voice of the women who are studied, and I advocated for the African worldview in studying the career development of women in South Africa, since this worldview adopts social constructivist techniques.

Furthermore, I concluded again that the use of quantitative approaches is one of the limitations of existing career research. In this chapter, I highlighted that further investigation into the career development of women will help generate better theoretical models that describe the career development trajectories of women in South Africa, in line with my research aims. This research thus moves away from positivist underpinnings to social constructionism. Social constructionism takes the ontology of a fluid reality one step further, in the belief that there is not only one fluid reality, but many realities specific to the people and locations that hold them, and this was elaborated on in chapter two.

Thus, in studying the career development of women, a distinction should be made between their life and career stages, because women's careers do not always follow a linear progression. Importantly, women's career development trajectories cannot be studied in isolation from their environmental influences and personalities.

In the ensuing chapter, the focus is on the presentation of the findings of this study, against the meta-theoretical background of the literature studied in chapters four and five.

CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focused on the career development trajectories of senior women academics employed in South African HEIs, with the aim of constructing a career development theory for women academics that will contribute to the field of career success. The existing body of literature deals with the academic career, and looks at career success in this context in relation to identity development (Abele & Spurk, 2008; Sutherland, 2015), satisfaction (Bilimoria, Joy & Liang, 2006; Machado-Taylor, White & Gouveia, 2014), and productivity (Parker, 2010; Williamson & Cable, 2003). Other studies have examined the influences on academic career success (Stupnisky, Weaver-Hightower, & Kartoshkina, 2015) and the opportunities that academics encounter in the pursuit of their careers (Meyer & Evans, 2005). Few empirical studies have, however, specifically considered the career development trajectories and experiences of successful women academics within the South African context.

This chapter reports on the results constructed from an exploration of successful women in the South African HE context. Four themes emerged from the data, as presented in section 6.3 below. Before discussing these four themes, the chapter commences with a brief reflection on the meaning of career success and how it was approached in this study. Thereafter, I provide a summative overview of the results, depicting the main themes and their related sub-themes and categories in a table format. The bulk of the chapter is then dedicated to discussing each of the four main themes, including their sub-themes and categories, as they are grounded in the data.

6.2 CAREER SUCCESS: THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE DURING DATA ANALYSIS

With the focus of this study being successful women in academia, career success as a construct started to become increasingly important whilst I was analysing the data. In order to develop a comprehensive understanding of their career success stories, it became increasingly evident to me that a general understanding of career success, in

addition to the specific career theories discussed in chapter five, was important in guiding my interpretation of the data.

Sutherland (2015) defined success in academia as a social construct. She argued that no person's character, behaviours, actions, and qualities are fundamentally successful in themselves, but that success is a brand given to various actions or outputs of actions by others or by an individual. Although there does not seem to be any single definition of success, career researchers have however come up with a useful approach to define career success, by distinguishing between objective or extrinsic career success, and subjective or intrinsic career success (Greenhaus et al., 2019). The traditional view of objective career success defined career success as progression along a hierarchy of power or prestige, and measured success by criteria such as salary, promotion rate, hierarchical level and/or status. On the other hand, subjective career success is defined as career satisfaction, which is constructed subjectively by every individual (Abele & Spurk, 2009). Within the context of studying women's lives, subjective career success could therefore incorporate subjectively experienced phenomena such as work-family balance and good working relations, rather than obsessing about upward mobility. Subjective career success thus incorporates other valued aspects of one's life that are impacted by one's career decisions. In this study, women academics who adhered to the traditional objective criteria of career success in an academic environment were chosen as participants in the study. Women academics on an associate and full professor level were identified as potential participants. However, an analysis of their narrated career trajectories highlighted the essential role of subjective success criteria.

Scholars of career psychology argue that more research needs to take place on the construct of *subjective* career success (Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, 2005). The current study contributes towards the body of knowledge on academic career success and focused on both intrinsic (subjective) and extrinsic (objective) success factors in academia. Career success is an important concept to study in the academic context, as knowledge about individual and organisational factors that facilitate success in academia can benefit both individual academics and HEIs.

Eccles and Wigfield (2002) postulated that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are essential for career success, a finding that was confirmed by Raburu (2015), and which is also confirmed in the results of this study. Whilst some participants in this study attributed their career success to extrinsic factors, such as family and organisational support, women academics who did not benefit much from family support still succeeded, primarily because of the impact of other enablers, such as financial aid, networks and intrapsychic factors, as will be discussed in the sections below. From the findings, it is evident that intrinsic and extrinsic factors work together to facilitate a smoother career development trajectory for women academics, one that is characterised by fewer interruptions and delays.

6.3 A SUMMATIVE OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS

Literature on women and career progression in HE appears to be increasing (Aiston & Jung, 2015; De la Rey, 2002; Raburu, 2015; Subbaye & Vithal, 2016), although there is still a paucity of research that focuses on career development experiences of women academics within the South African context. In terms of the research objectives discussed in section 1.5 of chapter 1, this chapter deals with the empirical objectives of exploring and describing the factors contributing to the success of women academics. As noted above, four themes emerged from the data, and these themes reflect the success factors.

In this study, I utilised unstructured interviews with 13 women professors in HEIs in South Africa, to explore and describe their career development trajectories. The themes that were derived from the data followed a social constructivist perspective, as the data were analysed through constructivist grounded theory analysis. The themes reflecting the career experiences and trajectories of senior women in HEIs are the following: (1) enabling and constraining environments associated with career success of women academics in South African HEIs; (2) intrapsychic factors affecting women academics' success; (3) behavioural patterns of women in academia; and (4) differential career development trajectories. The four key themes are based on sub-themes conceptualising the meaning of the theme.

Furthermore, in this chapter, I discuss the categories of sub-themes, which are all integrated to some extent with the theoretical elements discussed in chapters four and five.

Figure 6.1 below graphically presents a summary of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews, followed by categories of sub-themes drawn from the participants' responses, to allow the reader to understand the flow of the discussion that follows. Themes 1 and 2 primarily describe factors influencing career success, whilst theme 3 looks at the behavioural patterns of successful women academics, and lastly, theme 4 gives a description of the differential career development trajectories. Table 6.1 provides a summary of the themes and sub-themes, and the categories of sub-themes. Furthermore, the interaction dynamic between the extrinsic (enabling or constraining) and intrinsic factors is noted throughout, and this research found it impossible to single out one factor as being more important to career success than any other. From the findings, I can confidently state that the presence of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors has contributed towards the success of these women in their academic careers.

Figure 6.1: A summative reflection on the main themes and sub-themes

The discussion of each theme, together with sub-themes and categories of sub-themes, follows in the remainder of the chapter. Each theme is thoroughly explained and substantiated with verbatim excerpts from the interviewees' transcripts.

6.4 THEME 1: ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING FACTORS IN THE CAREER SUCCESS OF WOMEN ACADEMICS

This theme answers the research objective of which external factors are responsible for the success of women academics. These factors include both the enabling and constraining factors in the success of women academics. From the participants' responses, I gathered that both enabling and constraining factors were very instrumental to their success. Whilst the constraining factors could potentially lead to failure when not managed properly, they became the push factors for success. This is an essential element in understanding women academics' career development trajectories, and how it is not only the enablers that are responsible for their success, but also how women turn their constraining factors into success. It was interesting to note the interplay of the factors throughout the study.

Furthermore, this theme relates to the fourth objective of describing successful women's career trajectories. From the analysis and interpretation of the interview data, four sub-themes were identified, which are discussed as the enabling and constraining factors associated with success of women academics, namely: (1) upbringing and expanding horizons, (2) family support, (3) work- family balance; and (4) organisational support, as depicted in Figure 6.2 below.

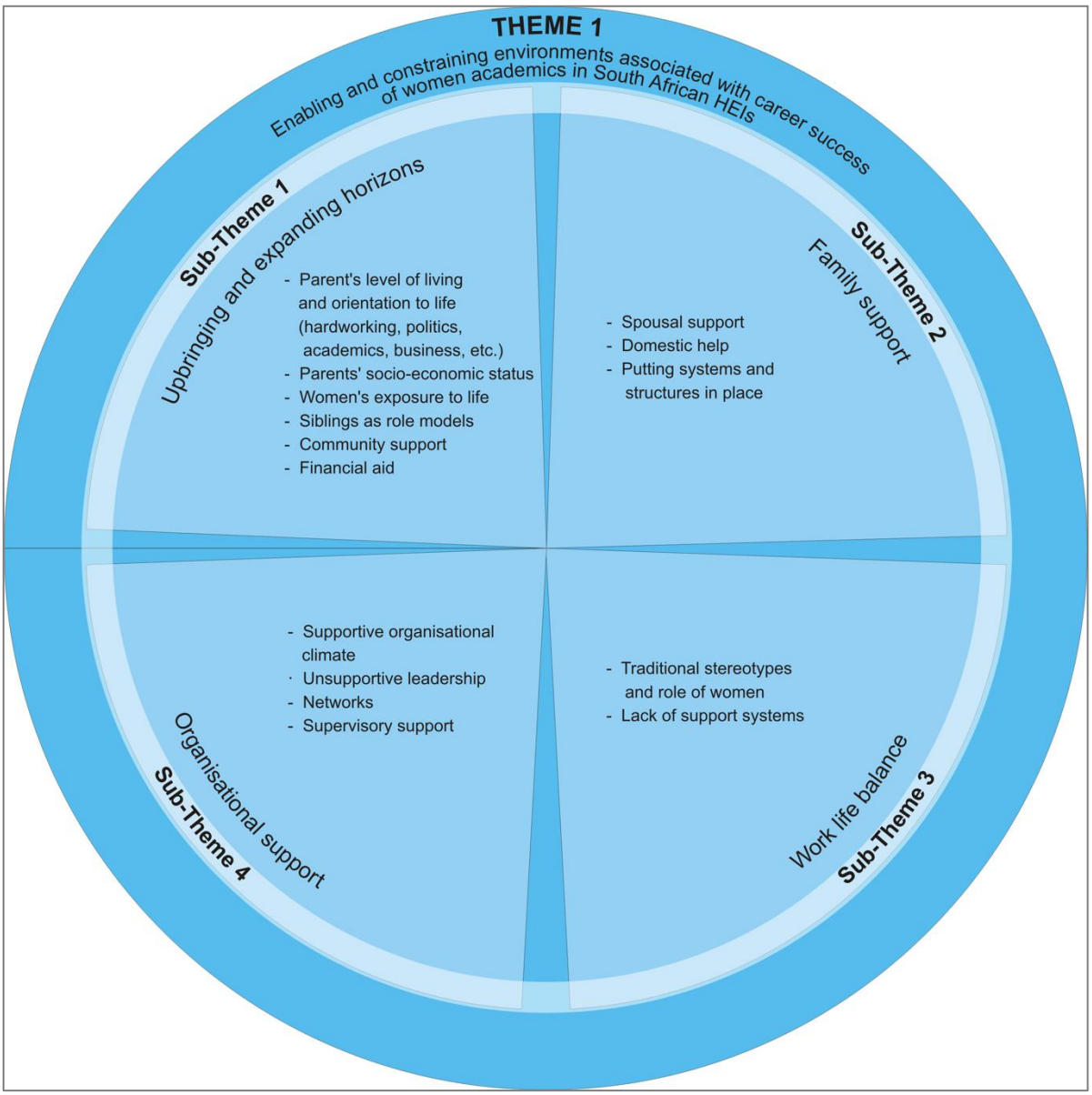

Figure 6.2: Enabling and constraining environments associated with career success

6.4.1 Upbringing and expanding horizons

This sub-theme relates to the parents' standard of living in terms of their educational, political or business background and involvement. This theme describes the role of the socio-economic status of parents, as well as how having hardworking, supportive parents, regardless of their status in society, can serve as an enabler of their children's success, especially during the exploration phases of their career trajectory. Furthermore, women's exposure to life, which includes moving away from their immediate environments, with less opportunities, and their personal life experiences,

have shown the propensity to expand women academics' horizons and thinking about their future beyond their immediate environments, which may not be favourable at the beginning of their career journey. The role played by siblings and community role models, and the support offered by bursaries at the universities where they studied, is also significant.

6.4.1.1 Parents' socio-economic status

Parents' level of education, as well as their involvement in politics and business, tend to influence children's career choices. These aspects are related to a higher socio-economic level of functioning – that is either having an education, being involved in politics, or owning a business. Participant 6 narrated that her father, a lawyer, encouraged them to study further. Similarly, P13 reported coming from a background of learned parents, with her father being a chief and politician, and her mother - a prominent businessperson. She grew up in a home where the strategy of the country was discussed, which established political networks for her at an early age. P1 also described her parents as activists who were well read and knowledgeable about politics and socio-economic issues. This affected her career choices, as she studied transformation and equity: *"I grew up in a family of activists, so I understand unfairness".* Business experience was also associated with a higher socio-economic orientation and was beneficial to participants' career orientation, as P5 related: *"My mother was a business woman selling goods on the streets and providing transport to and from the village to town".* The parents' interests also played an important role. For example, the mother of P5 was a small business entrepreneur, and this ignited a business interest in P5, which she took to the highest levels by studying business management and marketing. Mortimer, Finch and Maruyama (1992) reported that parents with post-secondary education tend to emphasise the importance of education to their children, and this research supports their finding.

6.4.1.2 Parents' conscientious orientation to life

Having parents who are hardworking and self-driven influenced the career development of the women participants. Participant 10 stated, *"My parents taught me that determination is the key to success, much as my parents are not well learned, they*

are hard-working people". As already outlined in 6.4.1.1 above, the parents' standard of living and high socio-economic status played a major role in their children's career choice. However, in a different manner, it is noteworthy that participants who grew up in rural areas, and whose parents had little or no educational background, were still influenced by their parents in terms of their career choices. For example, although P5, P8 and P10 grew up in rural areas, they defied all the odds against them. Participants 5 and 8 were the first graduates in their villages. Although their parents were better exposed than others in their villages were, they were unlike the parents of other participants, who held senior positions in industry and politics. By being resourceful and investing in the education of their children, less affluent parents established social networks to empower their children. In this regard, the parents of P8 were people who continued to play a significant role in helping her to establish her career. Although P4 and P7 did not grow up in rural environments, their parents did not have the means to give them further education. Nonetheless, their parents played an encouraging role, which included looking for external resources to provide an educational path for P4 and P7. These parents had a long-term focus far beyond their socio-economic situations at the time. In support of this, P4 stated the following: "*imagine nobody in my family had gone to university. Therefore, my parents always encouraged my sister and I to study further. However, for me, I thought teaching was going to be my career, but I am still teaching but it is a different level. Being able to do research as well. I never worked in industry or anywhere else".* Similarly, P7 narrated, *"I am originally from Port Elizabeth. After matric, I went into teaching. In the 80's, if your parents couldn't afford university education, colleges offered teaching bursaries".*

Parental motivation and the determination to ensure that their children had access to education not only helped them to access external resources. Such a goal-driven and determined orientation to life developed in the participants a similar work and life orientation and laid the foundation for these participants' success.

6.4.1.3 Women's exposure to life-broadening experiences

Women's exposure to opportunities such as boarding school experience, leaving a rural village to go and study in a metropolitan area, and international travel through work and study have been found to broaden the life experience of women academics.

For example, participant 1 stated*: I went abroad because I wanted international recognition, then I got my MBA and was recruited by the Department of Trade and Industry in the UK for the African region".* Similarly, P8 remembered:

> *Then I found this university in Australia… So I sold my farm, looked for odd jobs working in kitchens and factories… as my career advanced, I added international exposure which affected my way of thinking about life immensely, though my upbringing is from a rural background.*

Participant 8, who was born in a rural village, left it to study in a semi-urban area, which changed her perspective on life. This is what she said: "At *boarding school, I didn't even have a night dress, only flaney. My aunts played a major role and my mother was a dressmaker. Everybody in the village knew I was going to boarding school, and my uncles assisted by bringing beds, while my aunts sewed clothes".* It is also remarkable in P8's case that the community was involved. In the same vein, P5 left a rural village to come and study in a metropolitan area, and never looked back. All these decisions influenced the participants' career development trajectories, and they later became role models in their areas of origin, with people other than themselves sharing their success as they broke barriers to success. Participant 5 added: "*After matriculating, I pursued a degree and relocated from a rural area to study in Johannesburg, and that transformed my career life experience".* Similarly, participants such as P4, P7, P10, P11 and P13 added international experience to their academic and work experience.

6.4.1.4 Siblings who act as role models

In today's families, the traditional family model, as depicted by Bank and Kahn (1982), has been disrupted. Factors such as both parents working, children staying in boarding schools because of parents' professional demands, and divorces and single parenting challenges in other instances, have led siblings to have stronger and interdependent relationships (Powell & Gallagher, 1985, pp. 13-14; Heller & Arnold, 2010, p. 16). This can have a positive impact, with older siblings playing a positive role in the professional lives of their younger siblings, as shown in this study.

Participants 10 and 13 are examples of participants who drew inspiration from their siblings. P10 had an elder sibling who was successful: "*My brother encouraged me to further my studies abroad … as he was already working in the UK. I am the last born at home; my brothers played a role in guiding my career. I was taught that I will finish school, go to university and find a job".* P13 grew up privileged as the last child, as all her siblings had already completed their education by the time she went to university: *I had educated siblings, my brothers were engineers, mathematicians, teachers, pilots, holding senior positions, and this was at the beginning of the 1960s. I grew up with policy-making being discussed at home. My other brother was a chief whip in the Parliament in non-South African country. He later became the minister of various things.*

From these stories, one can appreciate the positive impact that successful older siblings had on the career development trajectories of these women academics, even though they came from rural villages.

6.4.1.5 Community support

Participant 8 referred to the role played by teachers from her community and how they influenced her career decisions. Her career started as a teacher in the same school where she matriculated, and the principal recruited her after encouraging her to do a degree in teaching.

6.4.1.6 Financial aid

Low family income could have been a hindrance for P4, P5, P7, P8 and P11, as family income is another aspect of family background that influences the career development of youth, especially girls (Mortimer et al., 1992). However, these participants owed their success to the availability of funding opportunities to deserving students, which made higher education accessible and changed their career development trajectories for the better. This, coupled with their good academic progress, met the selection criteria for their bursaries, and enabled them to enrol for further qualifications. The higher they were qualified, the more their family of origin's income status retreated into the background, as they were now successful through their own efforts. This contradicts

the views of De Ridder (1990, p. 4), who postulated, "Being born to parents with limited education and income reduces the likelihood of going to college or achieving a professional occupational goal and essentially predetermines the child's likely vocational choice". This research refutes the opinion of De Ridder (1990), as evidenced by first-generation graduates (P4, P5, P7, P8, P11 and P12). Intrinsic motivation could have changed their career development trajectory, which included looking for opportunities to succeed, as their backgrounds were not promising, in that they came from families where the parents had little education and earned low incomes. P8, who was brought up in poverty and studied through a bursary, said:

> *I finished my BA, and I was the first in my village to pass matric and go to varsity. I experienced a lot of poverty during my varsity days; I would take leftover pieces of soap thrown away by others. During my 2nd year, I got a bursary. Results took time to arrive and letters were delayed. I got the news from clerical staff during registration. I was very shocked and decided to keep this to myself. I only asked after two weeks where the bursary came from. The finance came from the local/regional authority and Adams College. I studied 2nd year until UEd, with an Adams College bursary. I wanted to register for Honours. I had majored in Xhosa, History and Afrikaans and I qualified to do Honours in any of these, but decided to stop studying to go and work for my family.*

In conclusion, it seems that the nurturing and support from one's family can be regarded as a facilitator of actualising human potential. Participants, 1, 4, 7, 8, 10 and 13 have witnessed such support. Furthermore, opportunities such as international exposure or life-broadening experiences mitigate the influence of an individual's background, as shown by P4, P7, P8, P10, P11, P12 and P13. In contrast, exposure through migrating to institutions of higher learning and boarding schools in developed provinces, or certain locations in the same provinces, played a significant role, as shown by P5, P8 and P10, who grew up in rural environments.

6.4.2 Family support

From the responses, I identified three types of family support: spousal support, domestic help, and putting support systems and structures in place. The support of family is thus important for the career success of women.

6.4.2.1 Spousal support

Participants 7 and 9 are examples of participants whose spouses had a positive impact on their career development. As P7 reported, *"My husband took on a very active role in the rearing of our son, and a lot of domestic responsibility.* Similarly, P9 stated*, "I have a very supportive husband, he's very hands-on in domestic responsibilities".* Participant 9 emphasised that having a supportive husband was an enabler of her success in academia. She was the only married participant who never got divorced.

On the other hand, P2, P11 and P12 are examples of lack of spousal support. Participant 2 stated*, "My first husband struggled with my career success. I do not think it was easy for him".* Similarly, P12 reported*, "When I left for Australia to do my Master's, my marriage was already on the rocks, and every time I phoned my kids were crying on the phone, and I realised my kids were falling apart, I took them".* Participant 11 bluntly stated, *"I think it is still difficult for South African men to handle a hard-working woman like myself, especially within my culture. I let the kids cook, as they are now grown up. My husband complains about this. I think that society and the church have played a role in the shaping of these attitudes".* As children grow older, they become a support system and enabler of success for their mothers, because they start taking on domestic duties, as indicated by P11.

Since P7's first husband was supportive during her PhD studies, things started changing as she climbed the corporate ladder and divorce struck. On the other side of the coin, P11 reported divorcing twice because of her husbands' inability to understand her role as an academic, and thus not offering the support she required. The story of P12 buttressed what P11 said, as she remarried after coming back from Australia, having met a white man. However, they also divorced due to his lack of support for her career ambitions.

In these three cases, the issue of division of labour at home arose, which resulted in divorce. At the time of data collection, P11 was in her third marriage. Both P2 and P11 attributed their divorces to traditional cultural practices and expectations, where a woman's role is defined, and a man cannot do women's work, which leads to increased work-family conflict. Participant 2 stated that although her first husband was secure in his job, he was never supportive of her career ambitions. As opportunities for her career development presented themselves, her marriage became threatened, and they ended up divorcing, because her husband complained that she was no longer the woman he married.

6.4.2.2 Domestic help

Having a domestic worker, whether on a full-time or part-time basis, has proven beneficial to the success of women academics, as witnessed by P9 and P10. "*I also have a domestic helper that supports me* (P9). Similarly, P10 reported, *"Yes, I do have a helper at home".*

6.4.2.3 Putting structures and systems for support in place

Putting support structures and systems in place has been reported in this research as being key in describing the career trajectories of women academics. The support systems mentioned range from child-care facilities at home to elderly care facilities, drivers and helpers. The only participant, who reported taking care of her elderly parents (P3), had this to say about support systems, "*My siblings are all far. I have a sister in Johannesburg and a brother in Pretoria. I have a younger sister who also used to be in Pretoria but now she moved to the Free State. My dad passed away in the past two years. My mother passed eleven years ago. In addition, that was hard. It was very hard (sobbing). My dad stayed here in Stellenbosch after my mom passed away. Moreover, I was not, in terms of the time available, able to look after him, but I had very good caregivers. It didn't impact me much with time and I still focused very much on what I was doing."*

According to P7, her child was still attending pre-primary school when she was doing her PhD, and she had a husband who was hands-on regarding domestic duties, who

thus became an enabler of her career development. As her career advanced, however, they got divorced, and she relied on putting systems and structures in place, such as getting a driver to drop off and fetch her son from school. This is what she reported, *"When I decided to take sabbatical leave to go to Saudi Arabia, I was going through a separation with my ex-husband. My son had passed matric and he could drive. I then put in place structures and left for Saudi Arabia".*

Participant 13 got divorced early in her life after having three children, and before she had accumulated all her education. She only remarried after completing her PhD. From these scenarios, what becomes clear to me is that as these women climb the corporate ladder, which puts pressure on their careers, the less understanding some of their husbands become, resulting in divorce. Even where their husbands initially showed support, as these women progressed in their careers, their husbands tended to retreat into the background, and they were left to their own devices. In the absence of support from their spouses, these women academics relied on putting structures and systems in place. However, putting systems in place works in the same way for both single and married women, as it creates time to focus on other more important things, such as research and leadership.

Participant 3 became very emotional when talking about her elder care responsibilities, which were exacerbated by a family that lived far away, hence the decision to move her parents closer. She coped through the support of caregivers.

The findings of this research are consistent with Friedman's (1991) research, which found that families contribute to work progress. Family conflict is experienced when the employee has any of the following: a disapproving spouse (P2, P7, P8, P11, P12); inequalities in the marriage (P11, P12); an unequal division of labour at home (P2, P11, P12); children (P2, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13); unstable childcare arrangements (P5); and elder care responsibilities (P3), especially when relatives live at a distance. Though Friedman's (1991) study was conducted more than two decades ago, the results of this research supported his proposition.

6.4.3 Work-life balance

Work-life balance is one of the critical factors in determining the career success of women and has to be managed to ensure a successful career development trajectory. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) asserted that work and family conflict occur when participation in the work role and the family role is incompatible in some respect. There is a perception that married women and women with children struggle more with work-family balance than a single woman with no children, though there is no empirical evidence to support such perceptions (Aiston & Jung, 2015; Duncan, Edwards, Reynolds & Alldred, 2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). This also became evident in this study, as marital status has not been shown, according to the research findings, to be a constraining factor for women academics. It appears that marriage alone is not a penalty for women's advancement, especially when the husband is as supportive as that of P1, P7 and P9. However, even with the diminishing support of husbands, participants such as P2, P8, P11, P12 and P13 still succeeded because they put structures in place, or even in cases of late starts, they sustained their efforts, coupled with their strong efficacy beliefs, grit and passion, as will be discussed in 6.5 below. This is another example of the interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic factors in career success.

A woman's desire for *balance* is the most sought after and hardest to achieve parameter (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007). The balance concept speaks to the need for equilibrium across multiple areas of life. Sturges and Guest (2004) contributed that work-life balance denotes not only a balance between work and family, but also a balance between work and the rest of one's life activities. In addition, work-family integration is considered to help in promoting the well-being of women (Greenhaus et al., 2019). Policies such as sabbatical leave assist women in work-family integration, which again demonstrates the interaction of enablers, that is, work-life balance, which is enabled by supportive organisational policies. Participants 8, 9 and 12 are examples of women academics who benefitted from sabbatical leave policies. From their narratives, it is clear that HEIs offer flexible work structures, research and development leave and sabbatical leave, which these women academics have access to, and this helps in managing work and life. Participant 3 reported working three days in the office and using the afternoons for reading and writing. Thursdays and Fridays are reserved

for postgraduate supervision. Similarly, P4 blocks out one day per week for research, as her day is consumed with meetings, as the Head of the Department and Vice Dean in her faculty.

As P3 puts it, *"I sort of arrange my day. I am a morning person and so I am in the office by 6 am every day. I do what I must do by 13h00 for three days in a week. Again, I have the help of a wonderful secretary, she organises my diary, and I feel like I can organise my appointments and interactions with staff and students as economically as possible. Three days of the week I can actually finish at 1 o'clock and then I can work at home in the afternoons, and that quiet time is very important to me, and of course, the evenings".*

Similarly, P4 said*, "So when you get your first full time job, because you are so used to having 100% of your day devoted to research, you have to find time to do teaching and research. So, every morning, I spend 7am to 9am on research before any interruptions during the day".* Again, P4 said*, "I am close to 50 and just been married and have no children. The balance for me is if you don't have a family you have to make sure you have balance in a different way, so for me before marriage, it has been the dog and I enjoy gardening."* Participant 6 made a similar statement*, "I find balance by relaxing when I am not at work, doing gardening, cooking for my dogs*". (*She showed me pictures of her dogs on her phone).*

Time management skills are a critical element of work-life balance, which also interacts with good career planning, as will be discussed in 6.5 below. Participants 3, 4, 6 and 10, single, are examples of women academics whose work fills most of their daily activities. These four women have made work the centre of their lives, sacrificing relationships, marriage and children (this will be discussed under 6.4 below). Their juggling includes mainly work and research time. Furthermore, P4 is an example of an academic who switched from being a full-time student until her postdoctoral studies to balancing work and research. It would be interesting, however, to find out how things pan out for P4 now that she is married and thus has additional activities to manage. The research findings do not support the theory that single women with no children will have higher chances of success than married women with children. What has been demonstrated, however, is the interplay of enabling factors. Although the narratives of

married participants, such as P7, P9 and P11, are different, married life is fraught with work-life balance challenges, such as raising children whilst working and studying, which seems to take up more of a woman's time than looking after a husband. However, where husbands are resourceful, the impact of children on career development is mitigated, as in the case of P7 and P9, especially during the career establishment phases of their lives. On the other hand, P5 is single with two children, which has to some extent delayed her academic progress.

From this discussion, it is evident that children have an influence on the academic career of women. This is in line with Mason and Goulden (2004), who postulated that the effect of academic careers on family formation shows that women who successfully pursue ladder-rank faculty careers are quite different in their patterns of family formation. Lack of support and the traditional stereotypes held by spouses regarding the role of women has obviously led to increased work-family conflicts, as reported by P2, P8 and P11. In contrast, although P7 and P9 had small children during their PhD studies, support from their husbands made it possible for them to thrive. Participant 3, the only participant who alluded to elder care responsibilities, although this happened after she had finished her PhD. She also relied on putting structures and systems in place, such as outsourced care, which meant that her work was not negatively impacted, as she was in the maintenance stage of her career, with established parameters for the structure of work, although she reported emotional exhaustion.

6.4.4 Organisational Support

This theme sums up the nature of the support that participants received or expected from the organisations for which they work. According to their responses, this theme consists of the following categories: supportive culture, leadership support or lack thereof, networks and supportive supervisors. It also relates to the objective of exploring the factors that contribute to or inhibit the success of women academics.

6.4.4.1 Supportive organisational culture

A supportive organisational culture is one with a supportive leadership, and a working environment that is conducive to the advancement of women academics. Working

under supportive leadership has been reported to be an enabler for success. Four of the white participants attested to the positive contribution of supportive organisational cultures to their career success (P2, P3, P4, P6), and two of the black participants (P9 and P12) did so. Participant 2 stated, *"I worked under a male Dean, who was very supportive, he said, I cannot promote you because you haven't achieved your Doctorate. If you want a promotion, do a Doctorate. I got my PhD, and shortly afterwards I was given an opportunity to become a HE researcher at the University".* Similarly, P4 reported that working under supportive male leaders has enhanced her academic experience. "*There are males more senior than me who have really supported me and I have been lucky in that regard"* (P4). Lastly, P3 reported, *"I always felt like I got enough individual attention in terms of the field of study, but also because I was appointed at a young age. At both these universities I worked in a very enjoyable environment and atmosphere that is conducive to research".*

Other means by which HEIs offer support is through their policies and incentives. For example, P7 did not only get financial support, but also sabbatical leave: *"Technikons subsidised my studies. There were financial incentives at institutional level and the internal drive. I then enrolled to do a Master's in Education".* Even in her case, the interaction between the intrinsic (internal drive) and extrinsic factors (organisational support through sabbatical leave and study subsidy) is evident, which indicates to me that organisational support alone will not ensure academic success but has to be accompanied by internal drive.

6.4.4.2 Unsupportive organisational culture

An unsupportive organisational climate is characterised by patriarchy, antagonism, little or no leadership support, and lack of mentoring, contrary to what is discussed in 6.4.4.1. Participant 1 reported blatant victimisation, being targeted, and a network that worked against her. She obtained an associate professorship, which she was not happy about, because as an associate professor she would now be part of the management team, which was a white, male-dominated management committee. According to her, she received no leadership support, and she experienced what she calls "gender inequality", which was exacerbated by being black, since this amounted to double discrimination.

There was a sense of discomfort initially, as there was another black person in the management committee, and we were not welcomed with open arms in that sense. So I never got any support, but I'm glad I stood my ground − there were a lot of issues that were brought to my table, saying a lot of things that were untrue, basically that's what was happening.

Participant 1 reported the worst scenario of antagonism and an unsupportive organisational culture, more than any other woman academic in this research did. I attribute this to the timing of her appointment and the fact that issues of gender discrimination and transformation were not openly discussed at the time. However, other participants also reported incidences reflecting an unsupportive culture, especially for blacks, coloureds and Indians. As women, they were made to feel that they do not fit in with the old boys' network, and being black, the discrimination was double, as there were gender as well as colour issues. Participant 7 relayed a similar experience. "*I was a woman and a coloured, and did not fit the university profile of a suitable candidate. The organisational culture did not support women's equity. The culture was male-dominated."* What is common in their experience is that as a woman academic, you are not a threat as long as you occupy non-leadership roles. Participants, 1, 7 and 8 stated that: *Even with research publications and leadership potential and experience, they want to keep you at the bottom, and when they appoint you, they do not support you. You are actually set up for failure*.

Lack of mentoring seemed to be more prevalent amongst black women academics. Participants, 1, 5, 8 and 10 reported unsupportive organisational climates with closed circles, where it is hard to penetrate as a black woman, especially for those who joined academia before the transformation of HEI's. As relayed by P1:

It's very difficult as a black woman and that's the reality at universities, they keep you down for as long as possible, so I was there for a number of years and I was publishing more than anyone else and lecturing Master's students and supervising Doctorate students, black people who were appointed were in lower positions, and black people appointed to higher positions were foreigners. So there was a lot of transformation that still had to take place.

Furthermore, P8 also reported a lack of mentoring in research in HBU's, *"There was a lack of mentoring and in those days, universities didn't emphasise research".* However, P10, the youngest participant in terms of years and tenure, reported a lack of mentoring in both South African and UK HEIs, *"No, I didn't have a mentor, I was just very determined to achieve what I wanted to, even in the UK; I never had anyone who I adored enough to get mentorship from".*

However, it is clear, because I am reporting on successful women academics, that even working in antagonistic organisational climates did not deter them from their long-term objective of getting a professorship, which is a lesson for other upcoming women academics. These women all had a gritty personality, which will be discussed in 6.5 below, despite the fact that success in academia does not come without challenges. In essence, one needs to have an enduring spirit and focus.

6.4.4.3 Networks

It became clear from the interviews that success in academic practice is largely dependent upon building networks in a specific subject area. From the responses, it is evident that networks played an important role in academic development, as P4 reported: *"When I was at UCT I used to be part of a group that brought international guests to South Africa, so we used to have many international guests, that is how networking was established".* Participant 4 reported that she started writing with international guests who visited, attended international conferences, and established networks for her postdoctoral fellowship after her PhD. It was her decision not to work abroad, as she received offers of employment. She has written a book with an international colleague who was interested in her PhD research.

Similarly, P12 reported: "*When I was at NMMU I worked with researchers from Canada and US, and this developed my research interest. We co-wrote three papers on culture … I then applied for a Fulbright Scholarship in 2006 to do my PhD*". Other networks are supportive colleagues, as reported by P3 and P8. Participant 3 stated, *"I mean from the onset, I became very fulfilled and satisfied with the field of linguistics and I found that interesting and enjoyable, and together with that, lecturers and supervisors and people in the department who I enjoyed working with*". Similarly, P8, in explaining

the role played by her lecturers, had this to say, "*Whilst I was doing teaching, I got a letter from a senior lecturer from the Fort Hare University about a vacant junior lecturer position, with application forms attached".* Similarly, P7 reported that*, "I had key role players along my career path, not necessarily women, but people who kind of gave me an opportunity, so that was good".*

From the participants' responses, I established that networking essentially takes time to develop. The participants indicated that one must establish networks during one's years of study, such as postgraduate studies, and in the early years of one's academic career, both locally and internationally. This can be done through conference attendance, relationships with colleagues in the department, and co-authoring of papers and books. Of all the participants in this research, P4 was the most active in establishing networks from the time she did her Master's degree. She started writing with international guests who visited, and she attended international conferences, establishing networks for her postdoctoral fellowship after the completion of her PhD degree. It was her decision not to work abroad, even though she received offers of employment. She has written a book with someone from Poland, who was interested in her PhD research.

6.4.4.4 Supportive supervisors

Supportive supervisors were reported to have had a positive influence on the career development trajectories of women academics (P4, P6, P7, and P9)*. "It was through my supervisor and the research group that I participated in."* (P4). She further reported that she co-authored with her supervisor. *"In my first two years of being a lecturer I was writing a book with my supervisor, which arose from my PhD."* P6 and P7 also stated*, "My supervisor encouraged me to enrol for a PhD".* Lastly, P9 also highlighted the influence of her supervisor on her career decisions, "*so, I approached the Head of Department, he looked at my academic record. He encouraged me to go further after Honours and register for Master's and so forth".* The same Head of the Department later became her line manager and supervisor. As P9 reported:

> *What I like about having joined this Department is that it was like a blessing because I had many mature seniors who were willing to mentor me and*

encourage me, I was able to have a good relationship with my supervisor. And he was able to expose me to consulting, gave me the necessary skills, and we started consulting together. So then time went on, and I decided to do my Doctorate.

It appears that positive support from supervisors had an influence on women academics' decision to become academics, regardless of their race.

6.5 THEME 2: INTRAPSYCHIC FACTORS IMPACTING ON THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES OF WOMEN ACADEMICS

Intrapsychic factors refer to influences that come from the mind, psyche and personality, and which are intrinsically derived rather than externally resourced. Intrapsychic factors reflect the psychological processes of the individual that occur inside the mind, without reference to the person's exchanges with other people or events (Parsons, Frieze & Ruble, 1978). These authors argued that these processes could either be positive (egosyntonic), negative (egodystonic) or neutral. An example of a positive intrapsychic process might be the development of higher-level social skills acquired through learning. An example of a negative intrapsychic process might be stressing over competing social responsibilities, finding yourself in conflict with established social norms, morals, or conflicting beliefs and value systems. There is also a neutral intrapsychic process, which might be characterised by the aspects of ego integrity that define the personality – for example, a dislike of something, and a preference for one thing over the other, etc. (Greenson, 2016; Lipton, 1977).

In the context of this study, positive intrapsychic factors refer to the internal attributes that these women academics seemed to possess and applied, irrespective of their external resources. Where talent or high-level IQ would be easily associated with success, it was quite interesting to note that none of the participants attributed their success to talent.

This theme answers the research objective of which intrinsic factors are responsible for the success of women academics. The sub-themes that emerged are determination to succeed, grit and self-efficacy. Although these terms are closely related in terms of

meaning, they have fundamental differences, as will be discussed in the section below. Figure 6.3 below depicts the sub-categories of intrapsychic factors affecting women academics in HEIs in South Africa, as shown in the study.

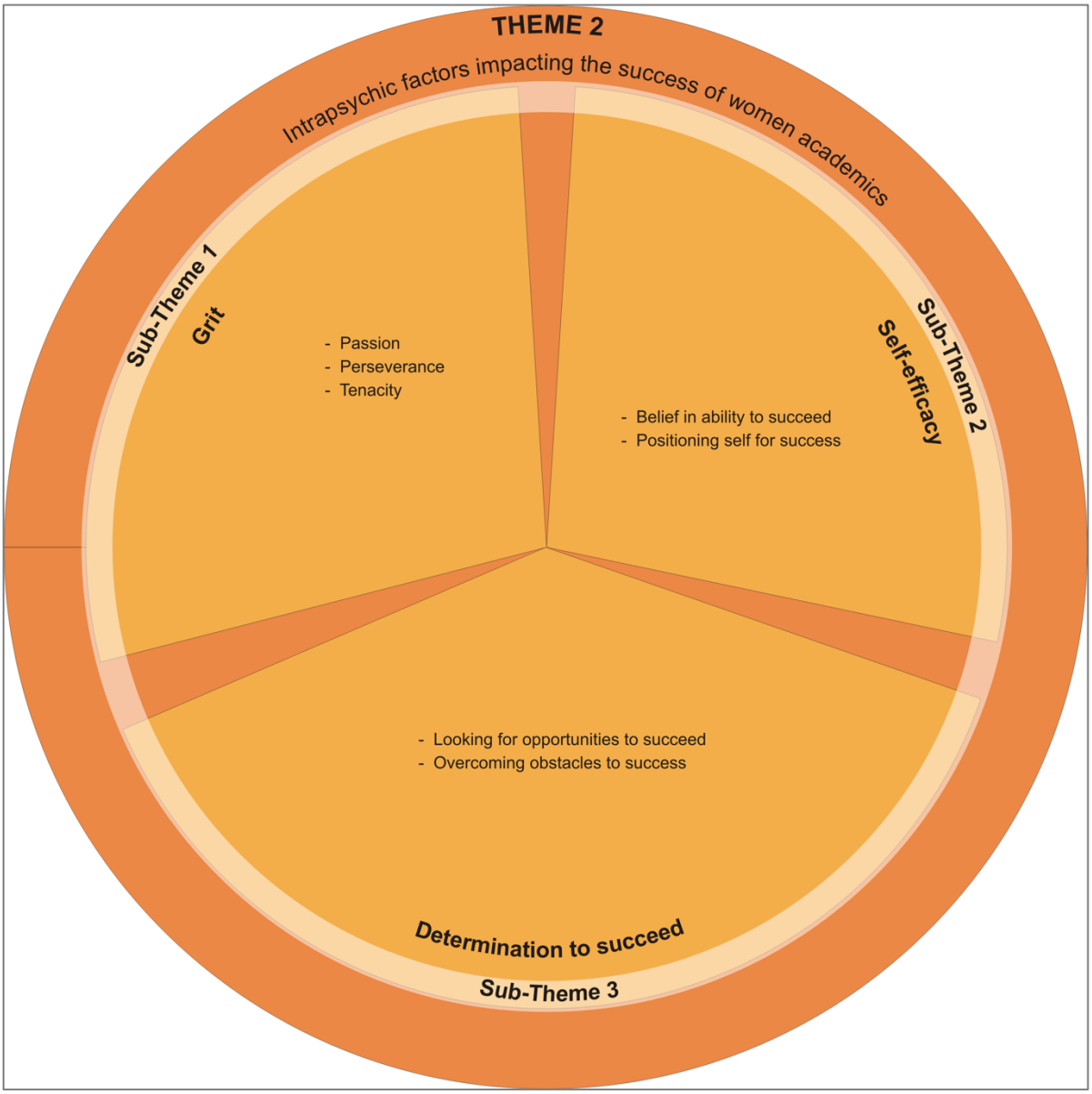

Figure 6.3: Intrapsychic factors

6.5.1 Determination to succeed

Determination was a constant feature among the women academics in this research. This was demonstrated by their consistent determination to overcome obstacles to success, coupled with looking for opportunities to succeed and discipline.

What became a defining feature for all the participants in this research was their unstoppable and fearless spirit, as witnessed, for example, by P1 and P10. Regardless of whether they were going to get it later than they had originally wanted (P5, P8), whether there were health (P12) or family background challenges (P4, P6, P7, P8), whether there was no organisational support (P1, P7, P8), or whether there was a divorce (P2, P7, P 8, P11, P12, P13), these participants used all of these challenges as their stepping stones, and were ready to face the challenges and conquer them. Even with breaks (P5, P8, P11) and interruptions (P2, P12, P13), they still managed to rise up, no matter how many times they fell along their academic trajectory.

Participant 12, for instance, was diagnosed with an illness as a child, which resulted in her starting her career late. At the age of 26, she finished her matric. Participant 12 said *"I wanted my child to have a better life, I was resilient through thick and thin. After burying my father, I went back to Australia to finish my studies and for my kids whom I had left behind."*

Participant 2, on the other hand, got married at the age of 20, and had interruptions while trying to juggle her studies and being a homemaker. She never stopped registering until she obtained her Master's degree. *"Even whilst I was interrupted, I kept researching until I got my Master's."* After getting her degree, she needed the stimulation of a career, which affected her marriage negatively. However, she was willing to do whatever it took to succeed, even if it cost her marriage.

Participant 1 relayed the following: *"Financially it was hard, the university paid me peanuts, but I was fine, I was doing my PhD".* Participant 1 left a secure work environment to pursue her PhD studies and struggled financially, but the fact that she was doing her PhD gave her satisfaction, and she was motivated by the realisation of her dreams.

Participant 5 mentioned that she thought she would get a doctorate at age 35, but she got it at 44. *"… I think I got tired, and I felt guilty by leaving my son all by himself to go to attend lectures. Moreover, not being married, I did not want to not be a good mother. My other reason is that it took me time to find my PhD topic. In 2006, I started thinking*

about the topic, so I registered in 2007. I then got an NRF bursary, but dropped out in 2008. I continued to register at UP in 2009".

For P12, her initial motivation was her child, and for P2, she wanted the stimulation of a career, after having been a homemaker for a long time. P1 shifted sectors and started at the bottom of the career ladder and took a knock financially. Participant 5 took a break because she became a single mother, but she persevered. When the opportunities to succeed presented themselves, she grabbed them with both hands, and made a success out of her situation.

In all these scenarios, there could have been valid excuses for lagging behind. However, what is common amongst these women professors is their ability to face and overcome obstacles, to get to where they are. Some women professors had more than one divorce (P11, P12). However, these experiences never deterred them from their dream of being a professor, nor did it deter them from wanting to love again. Another common trend that emerged in all these scenarios was looking for opportunities to succeed, even during times where there were breaks, interruptions and hardships.

6.5.1.1 Looking for opportunities to succeed

With regard to looking for opportunities for success, it is again evident from the responses that this was coupled with enablers such as supportive leadership, as in the case of P2, the highest achiever of all the participants, who became the Deputy Vice Chancellor at two institutions.

In her own words, she attributed her success in her career development trajectory to opportunities created for her, as well as the support of the leadership she served under. Participant 2 relayed, "*So what I'm trying to explain is that I was fortunate in a sense that people created opportunities for me, and what's interesting is that all of those people were males. Therefore, in the first place, if this Dean did not encourage me to do my PhD, then I might not have done it...Then the vice rector of the institution approached me and asked me to become his academic advisor, so in addition to my job as a director I also got more involved in advising top management of the institution. Then there was a change of board and the vice chancellor retired and the deputy vice*

chancellor became the vice chancellor, and he then appointed me as the acting deputy vice chancellor, previously his post and I acted for about 9 months and I really gained and learned a lot. Therefore, when the position was advertised, various people approached me to apply and I got the position. I then worked with the VC and for me that was one of the highlights of my career, because he was male but he was very open to diversity. In addition, he believed we all should be as diverse as possible. Therefore, we were people from different races, genders, backgrounds, and language groups and so on.

Similarly, P4 had this to say, *"I did my undergraduate studies at Rhodes. We visited Cape Town and I went to UCT. There I learned of a Master's programme in maths and computer science, but I did not want to be a computer science programmer, … I came to UCT to do my Master's and I was still intending to do teaching, but during my studies I really enjoyed the research, because before then I was not exposed to research. Therefore, the bursary paid, and I continued to do my PhD in mathematics at UCT, and then towards the end of my PhD, I was invited to a conference in Germany. Then I spent some time in England and France working with some researchers. From then I knew I was going to become an academic and through those visits, I was able to secure a post- doctoral position at Oxford University, straight after completing my PhD − I went to Oxford for two years. In addition, while I was in Oxford, a position became available at UCT − a vacancy as a lecturer.*

In the case of these two participants, I see people who grabbed opportunities to succeed, which had a positive impact on their career development trajectories.

6.5.1.2 Overcoming obstacles to success

With regard to overcoming obstacles, P7 mentioned that at the time she did her PhD she had a four-year-old son, and there were no emails then. She had to travel a distance to go to the library and access journals and books, and she used the post office to communicate with her supervisor. As she puts it "*it is my determination to succeed that made me complete my studies."* As P12 stated, "*I finished my Master's within a year, I was resilient through thick and thin, and I immediately started my PhD proposal*." During this period, her father died, she got divorced and had to relocate with

her children overseas. However, in the same year, she completed her Master's and her PhD proposal was accepted. She sold her farm, as she was not financially viable, and took part-time jobs in factories and restaurants, so that she could maintain herself and her children.

Furthermore, P12 overcame obstacles to success, in that although she had health limitations, which meant a late start for her, she did not allow this to work against her. She kept knocking at the doors of success until they opened. This is an example of her narrative: "*Although I wasn't qualified, my English was very good; I managed to get a job at the Transkei Development Corporation (TDC) as the secretary. In that process, whilst I was there, I tried to get the certificates that I got in Zimbabwe to apply for conditional exemption, and gave these to my brother in law, an inspector then, to fast track the process of my getting university admission. The reason why I wanted to get to the university was that I left the TDC, got a job at Lovedale Press, and got that influence of a university. I wanted my child to have a better life, and I could see that I am not dying anyway. Therefore, I gave my papers to my brother in law, who lost all the papers. When my child was 9 months old, I decided to go to school, so I stayed with my sister in Mqanduli. I did my matric at Holomisa High in Mqanduli. I studied full time at the age of 26 years doing my matric, I paid my helper to look after my son. I resigned from my previous job, and I got some money from my pension. I was forced to do Afrikaans for the first time, Maths, Biology, Xhosa, English and Needlework".*

6.5.2 Grit

Recent research shows that success in academia is about grit as it is about talent or intelligence (Duckworth & Gross, 2014; Dweck, 2010 &; Steier & Young, 2016). Furthermore, according to Duckworth (2013), grit as a predictor of success, can be taught. Grit is defined as a positive, non-cognitive trait based on an individual's *perseverance* of effort, combined with the *passion* for a particular long-term goal or end state (Duckworth, 2019). Grit serves as a powerful motivation to achieve long-term objectives, as it has a growth mind-set. Dweck (2010) discovered that people with a growth mind-set hold the belief that intelligence is related to experience and the tenacity to learn. Furthermore, perseverance of effort comes with experience from a person with a growth mind-set. Individuals with a growth mind-set believe that through

dedication and effort, they can develop their talent, which implies that intelligence can be developed. Another outstanding feature of people with a growth mind-set is eagerness to learn, and being serious about working on your weaknesses, which is a requirement in the career development trajectory of a woman academic, as shown in this study. Duckworth and Gross (2014) in turn encourage the overcoming of obstacles or challenges that lie on the path to accomplishment, and this serves as a driving force for achievement of success.

In line with the conceptual meaning of grit, the sub-categories of grit in this research are perseverance and passion. In addition, the participants' grit was exemplified by their tenacity, which will be explained below with specific reference to extracts from the participants' responses. Grit, tenacity, and perseverance have been identified in research and practice as potential high-leverage factors that can be fundamental to educational achievement and life outcomes.

6.5.2.1 Perseverance & Tenacity

According to Duckworth, Kim and Tsukayama (2013), stressful life events can impair self-control, which is an important factor for perseverance. They further argued that individuals coming from poverty normally face conditions that may do little to promote (or may undermine) perseverance, and which provide limited opportunities to develop the psychological resources that set them up for success. They may also lack the social resources to get academic help when needed, and guidance on how to navigate their career development trajectories and get ahead in life. However, from the responses of the women academics, these research findings can be negated. Some of these women have gone through stressful events during their youth, as well as during their adult life. Some came from high poverty backgrounds, such as P8, but did not allow their circumstances to determine their progress. This could also be attributed to the fact that perseverance develops with time and is a learned ability. I can thus conclude that the more challenges to success the participants overcome, the stronger they become, and the abler they are to face other challenges in life.

As P12 relayed*, "When I came from sabbatical leave with my Master's and registered for my PhD, professional jealousy was very rife in my department. The then DVC and*

VC called me in to tell me about challenges in my department and that they needed my support in heading the department. So the position was advertised for the HoD. The then HoD was ousted by students and the department was almost closed and the DVC said that we cannot close a department when there are students and staff busy developing themselves. The position took time to be filled and there was now a departmental idea that the department should be managed by committees, where everybody has an opportunity to lead. This was a plot by a colleague to frustrate the process of having me as the HoD, as he didn't have the Master's qualification that was required for the position, and there was a lot of conniving and influencing other colleagues against me, but I stayed" (P12).

Participant 8 survived a divorce during her Master's degree, as well as the death of her father, and sold her house in order to cope with the financial demands of raising children and financing her studies. In addition, when returning to the department, there was no support or excitement for her achievements. In fact, all the odds were against her in terms of getting ahead, but she kept on going. Similarly, P7 conveyed that, "*After the university was remodelled, I was appointed as the director of the school, and after that I was appointed as a deputy executive dean. After this, I hit a ceiling, when the dean was recruited from outside. I was a woman and a coloured, and did not fit the university profile of a suitable candidate. The then organisational culture did not support women's equity. The culture was male dominated. They appointed someone with a recent PhD, and as the deputy executive dean, I had to do all the work for him. My experience fitted the profile of the candidate required, but the organisational culture did not support the emancipation of women. I then decided to take sabbatical leave, and went to Saudi Arabia. This was at the time I was going through a separation with my ex-husband. At this stage, my son had passed matric, and he could drive. I then put in place structures and left for Saudi Arabia."* In both scenarios, it is noteworthy that marital challenges happened at the same time as professional challenges, but their perseverance made them look for more opportunities to succeed, and this was their coping mechanism during times when they hit rock bottom.

Tenacity, is another trait that is inextricably linked to perservance. It is generally known as the ability to hold fast amid challenges. From the responses given by participants, it became evident that they faced many challenges; both professionally and personally,

however, this never stopped their focus on succeeding in what they were doing. As P11 relayed, "*I married and divorced, remarried and divorced again and remarried. When you are married, you work extra hard to be at the level where I am, and when you have kids, and we have a culture that makes men expect to be served by a woman. I attribute my success to hard work. I am always ahead of the game. Even in the institute that I am leading, I must be ahead in my job so that the institute grows. When I first arrived here, there was nothing, I started from scratch, there was no handover. I did consultations with people who work with the Institute. Now there is smooth M&D administration, there is recognition of talent by colleagues, there are good relations with other colleges. The relations have improved and are now better than when I first arrived. The institute is servicing other colleges, and the Institute gives the university a good name"*.

In a different manner, P12 reported that; "*After attending my grandfather's funeral at the age of 14, I was diagnosed with typhoid, which was incurable, and my mother told everyone in the family that I was not going to make it, so she instructed everyone, let's love her as much as we can. So, I grew up expecting that anytime I will die and nobody believed that I will make it in life. I had already prepared myself for my dying day, so whenever I had a headache, I thought my day had come. All my siblings finished their matric before me because my academic progress was disturbed by my sickness a number of times. I was the sickly [one] of the four siblings. I stayed at home, I was in and out of hospital, sometimes for longer periods like three months in a row. When I was 16 (1972), my parents got divorced, so they started fighting about custody. My father would take us and my mother would go fetch us. This sickness made me develop very late, even my first menstruation started at 21, also, academically I developed very slowly."*

6.5.2.2 Passion

From the responses, the power of passion, as one of the major components of grit, according to the world's leading expert on the subject, Angela Duckworth (2018), was evident in all the women. P3 said, "I *was very fulfilled and satisfied with the field of linguistics.* Again, P6 said, "I *mean I would like to do nothing but theatre*". Participant 11 further stated, "My *goal has always been to teach maths to children of African descent because of the low maths output in our black schools*". It is therefore obvious that passion comes with doing what you enjoy doing, and wanting to develop yourself in that field, so that you become an expert. This passion propelled these women academics to push boundaries and overcome obstacles to their success goals, in line with Pueschel and Tucker (2018). Participant 6, for instance, reiterated that, "*If you are single and self-supporting, academia might not be an easy space to be financially secure, particularly in the beginning, when you are still at the establishment stage of your career".* She started her career working full time in theatre, where she made good money, but she was headhunted by universities, as she had a Master's from a reputable institution abroad.

Participant 3 is another example of a woman academic who understood her passion for academia from the onset, and it has always been academia for her. Here again we see the interaction between her passion and the type of support and mentoring offered by her colleagues and seniors during the early stages of her career development trajectory. This highlights the inextricable link between the internal and external success factors in an academic's career trajectory.

She said, "*It just happened that I was very happy in my work and in my studies right from the outset. If I say 'happy' I mean I was very fulfilled and satisfied with the field of linguistics that I had been studying and I found that interesting and enjoyable, and together with that, lecturers and supervisors and people in the department who I enjoyed working with. So I think the point here is that (and it's a very simple point that many people have made) progression in careers and what you would see as success in careers is that element of absolute enjoyment and fulfilment and satisfaction, that was with me since I can remember. That was the overriding sort of experience that I had. I have worked in a fairly small department, not in an overwhelmingly big*

department, but I had good mentoring and I could develop. I actually was a full-time student until I had completed my Master's degree."

The common thread in all these stories is grit. From the stories of these women academics, I deduce that it was not only personal challenges they faced, but also professional ones, yet they still rose up after each setback. Participant 11, for instance, though she completed her matric on time and with flying colours, she had to take a break after finishing matric due to pregnancy. The family decided that they would rather support her child than finance her higher education, which translated into an interruption in her career development trajectory. However, she bounced back, grabbing the first available opportunity that arose. As she succeeded in one thing, she proceeded to the next level. Later in her adult life, she faced marital challenges, which did not stop her from ascending the academic ladder of success. Furthermore, P12 with her background of illness, which saw her only obtaining her matric certificate at the age of 26, could have easily become discouraged. As if that was not enough, she had two divorces in her adult life. Nonetheless, these experiences did not dissuade her from the bigger goal of becoming a professor. Similarly, P8 experienced health challenges in her career development trajectory, which meant that she was out of work for a period of four years, but she bounced back. *"In 1994-1998 I became sick. I was almost booked off, but I came back in 1998. The then HR Executive Director saved my job against all threats. Furthermore, in 2005 an institutional evaluation that threatened the closure of the unit which I headed was done. The evaluation report said that I must go back to the academic department for a junior position*."

In all these stories, one thing stands out about having grit. Regardless of whether the challenges were family-related, e.g. divorce; personal, such as health; or professional, such as restructuring or unsupportive work climates, these women stood the test of time, even with late starts, interruptions and breaks. Although they would never make up for the lost time, they still managed to sustain their efforts and make a success of their career trajectories.

6.5.3 Self–efficacy

The findings reveal that successful women academics had high efficacy expectations. From the onset, some of them believed that they have what it takes to be professors. As P10 said, *"I have always known I wanted to be a Professor, and I am one now".* Similarly, P4 reiterated, "… *from then, I knew I was going to be an academic and through my networks I was able to secure a post-doctoral fellowship at Oxford University."*

According to Bandura (1986), self-efficacy is one's belief in one's ability to achieve certain performance outcomes (Zimmerman, 2000). An outcome expectancy on the other hand, is when a person has an estimation that a given behaviour will lead to particular outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Hackett & Betz, 1983). Furthermore, Bandura (1986) and Hackett & Betz (1983), called it an efficacy expectation when there is an estimation that one can successfully execute the behaviour required to achieve successful outcomes. What has contributed to the participants' levels of self-efficacy is mentoring, coaching and role modelling, as explained by P2, P3, P4, P6, P10, and P13. All these factors, when combined, build self-efficacy, which again points to the interaction between internal and external factors.

Historically, black households have held values that place girls in the homemaker role, and less emphasis on occupational preparation. Considering this outlook, it is understandable that the self-efficacy of women academics from such backgrounds is given more prominence in terms of their career development than the self-efficacy of those from better backgrounds, with many support systems at home, as these black women had many more hurdles to overcome than an ordinary woman. Participant 5, for instance, stated that her mother told her that if she had remained in the village, she would be married by now, and her response was that she would never have become the professor that she is today. This highlights the conflicting values – the mother is worried that her daughter might have children outside wedlock, since she herself is still not married, whilst the daughter is satisfied with her academic progress, without downplaying the need for marriage. She believes that she made the right choices for herself, which have put her where she is today.

The self-efficacy theory of Bandura (1977) postulates that individuals' self-efficacy beliefs come from four primary sources, namely: performance accomplishments; emotional arousal; vicarious learning and modelling; and verbal persuasion. This demonstrates that self-efficacy is developed through both family support and organisational support. The results of this research revealed was that the achievement of one qualification propelled these women to further their studies, as P13 said, *"After finishing my Masters in Sweden, I immediately enrolled for PhD*. Again, P4 mentioned, "*During my honours, I decided to explore the possibility of doing my Master's."* Furthermore, P7 stated, *"There were financial incentives at institutional level and internal drive. I then enrolled to do my Master's in Education."* Thus, the financial incentives, coupled with her internal drive, encouraged her to study further. Participant 7 is a good example of an academic whose self-efficacy was built through mentoring and coaching, as she explained the role played by her supervisor in persuading her to further her studies, "My *supervisor encouraged me to enrol for my PhD, and technikon funding was available to finance my studies".*

Furthermore, P6 said, *"I never first and foremost described myself as an academic. A PhD was something I was going to do when I retired. However, Prof XYZ offered to supervise me. The offer clicked, as he is a highly respected scholar and an exciting supervisor*."

Thus, from the responses of the participants, it is evident that the role played by performance accomplishments, emotional arousal and verbal persuasion from influential people in their lives, such as parents, teachers, managers and supervisors, helped to strengthen their beliefs that they could succeed. Participants 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 highlighted the verbal encouragement by influential others in their lives.

Maddux (2002) suggested a fifth route to self-efficacy through "imaginal experiences", the art of visualising yourself behaving effectively or successfully in a given situation. There is a saying that if you can see it, then you can have it. As an aspiring professor, you must see yourself becoming one; as a PhD student, you have to see yourself getting a PhD degree, no matter what obstacles you meet along the way. As P5 said, when she saw her economics professor in her first year of study, she wished that she

could be a professor like him one day, and P10 said that she had always known that she would be a professor, and she became one.

6.5.3.1 Belief in the ability to succeed

Participant 10 believed that she could succeed because she came from a family associated with success, and as the last-born, she knew she had to succeed. She reported, "*I always knew I wanted to be a professor. I am from a learned family, where the minimum qualification that members have is an Honours degree. Everyone has a degree and I am the last born*".

In the same vein, P5 reiterated, "*I had a mission, and my mission was that when I complete my Honours, I will go to Master's. I was so ambitious. From doing my first degree at University of Venda to Wits, it's ambition. I was lucky at Honours level, as I got a bursary from HBRC, and it was for women in research … So I did my Master's at RAU because I was discouraged from doing my Master's at Wits, having obtained 50%.*"

What I admire about P10 is that her ambition alone was not sufficient to ensure progress, and she had to take actions aligned to her aspirations. Even after being an associate professor, she said, "*I am establishing and building myself in the field, you need to publish, and you need to publish in specific journals. I need to be innovative to have products and articles. I need to build my research profile and I need to innovate products. I do not want to teach about product design when I have never designed a product. I do not want to teach about products when I have not produced. I want the experience".*

In the same vein, P5 pointed out, "*For me I know what is expected. I know I want to be a Professor, and I need to publish to be a Professor. Then I do not want my peers to look down on me, I want them to know that I am capable and that is what drives me. Fortunately, for me I had people to look up to and I wanted to be like them. These people do not even know they inspired me because they would just stand there and lecture. I was inspired by a lot of different people - females, males and whites also".*

Both these stories demonstrate that success does not come by chance. You first have to believe in your ability to succeed, which is established by watching others who have succeeded before you and getting inspired. However, inspiration alone is not enough, but needs to be accompanied by perspiration to ensure that your aspirations become a living reality. These features came out strongly in the career development trajectories of these women academics.

6.5.3.2 Positioning the self for success

One of my observations from the research was that as soon as women academics noticed a disharmony between their professional goals and those of the organisations they worked for, they started looking outside for places that would offer them opportunities to succeed and get ahead. They did not expect their success to come from one place. As P7 indicated, after coming back from sabbatical leave, she noticed that this was no longer a place of growth for her, taking into consideration what she learnt in Arabia, and the prevailing culture in the institution where she worked, which she described as patriarchal and more supportive of an old boys' network than in promoting women who are capable and deserving, and so she left for a place of growth. To me, her approach demonstrates self-efficacy, because in positioning herself for success, and making sure that there was no stagnancy in her career development trajectory, she demonstrates her belief that she can be successful:

> *I didn't like coming back and finding the place not changed, no progress at all. A male dean, a foreigner, was appointed. Even after I came back, the person wasn't taken back to his position, because of male networks and the strong male culture. The other thing I found is that the unions are very strong in determining people's future. It then occurred to me that some people are making progress, and those who are not are allowed to determine the future of those who are progressing. At that time, another university advertised the position of deputy dean with the offer of associate professor. It was my intention to focus on building my academic profile. I noted that at that university, their promotions policy was enabling and facilitating. I applied and took on the position. When I joined their team, all executive deans were males, now there are at least three female deans, and only two faculties have male deans now. Nationally, four of*

the twenty-six vice chancellors are females, a decline from the previous figures. This is due to personal factors and organisational culture factors.

Similarly, P10 reported that she has never feared challenges. Self-efficacy is thus demonstrated when she is not afraid of challenges or obstacles, because she believes in herself and her abilities. This belief has contributed to her success. She said, "*To me, no job is too big. I always take cautious decisions, although I will not be in this position for too long, because it takes some of my time from certain things. After some time, you really start looking at your purpose, and the direction you are taking, and I think where I am, I have the liberty to say 'yes and no' even if the post is higher. I was offered a dean position at another institution in the Northern Cape. It was not a decision about money, but about purpose.".*

From these two stories, I have learned that you need to take responsibility for your success, and it is your choice as to whether you will stay when your goals are not met in the manner that you want. These women strongly believed in their contribution and they were fearless in grabbing opportunities, which meant that their career development trajectories progressed more quickly. They knew when to stay and when to leave. Participant 10 celebrated the contribution of international exposure, which was how she positioned herself for success. She emphasised that, *"I don't think I would have grown much here. In South Africa there needs to be a government intervention to force the growth of an individual, especially for women"*. Upon her return, having left for twelve years, she had the following to say about South African HEIs compared to the UK, "*I mean there were plenty of opportunities in the UK, which I had to apply and compete for to get them, and even volunteer when I needed to, in order to get the opportunity. However, the people there are different, you know. I did not feel the element of being black. However, returning to South Africa, it was a huge culture shock, as I was always reminded that you are black, unlike in the UK, where even as a foreigner, it was never an issue when it comes to opportunities. In South African academic institutions, you need to have a backbone to survive, it is more like a warzone, where you cannot challenge decisions or even stand your ground. When you speak out, it is regarded as disrespect or being out of order".* Participant 1 shared her sentiments about being a black woman in South African HEIs, and the culture shock that you get upon your return, after international exposure.

I decided to come back home because I missed South Africa, I missed the culture, I missed the people and I missed the sun … I was based in Scotland, and we promoted many different things there. There was a lot of good work that was done; there was a lot and hard work. It was excellent experience and I thought that when I come back I would share my experience; I really enjoyed what I did… By then promotions were not easy at all. Very few black people were appointed then in South African HEIs, especially in the previously white institutions. Moreover, black people who were appointed were at lower positions, and the black people appointed at higher positions were foreign. Therefore, there was a lot of transformation that still had to take place, and I was okay because of my experience. So there is a lot of effort that I tried to put in in terms of transformation, it was very slow, but I did my part to promote transformation and gender equality, as those things are close to my heart, but it was very slow as there was not much commitment. So after about five years, I decided to come to this university, which was another culture shock for me."

From the stories of P10 and P1, I learned that although these women positioned themselves for success by equipping themselves academically, they got a shock when coming back to their own country, with the hope of implementing the good things that they had learnt. The systems were just clashing, and at that point, they had to decide how to move forward for their career development trajectories to not become stagnant.

6.6 THEME 3: BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS OF WOMEN ACADEMICS

The behavioural patterns of women academics that are referred to in this research focus mainly on the actions, behaviours and decisions that women academics take to achieve success in their career development trajectories, which aims to answer the research objective of exploring the career experiences and trajectories of women academics. This theme is simply about what successful women academics do differently that makes them succeed. I name these patterns of behaviour, because they are consistent behaviours that are common amongst women academics. These behavioural patterns are: sacrifices and compromises, work centrality, career planning, and discipline. Figure 6.4 below illustrates the sub-themes that were constructed to conceptualise the meaning of the theme of behavioural patterns of women academics.

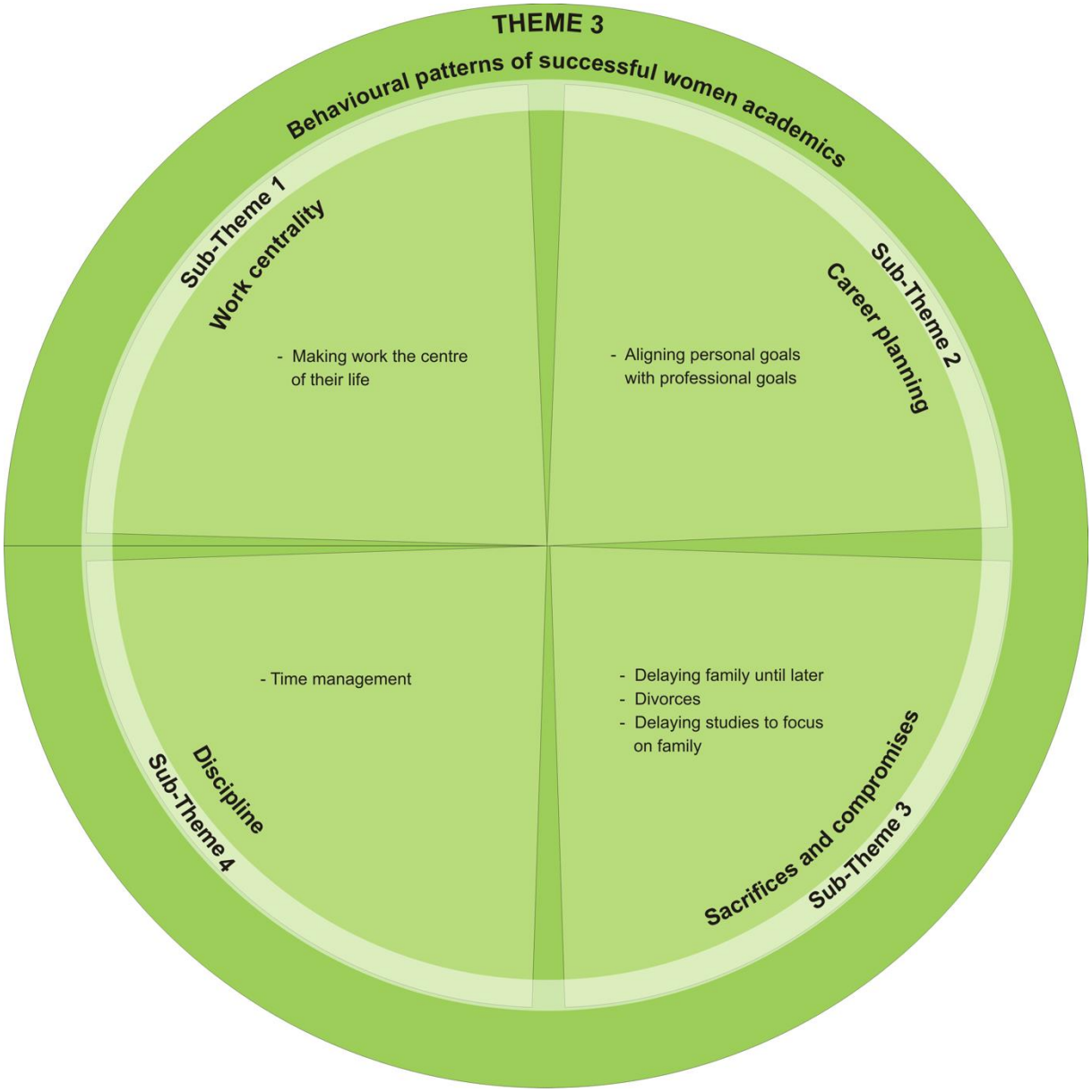

Figure 6.4: Behavioural patterns of women academics

6.6.1 Work centrality

Some women academics have succeeded through putting work at the centre of their lives, hence becoming career-driven. The concept of work centrality refers to the degree of importance that work has in one's life (Paullay, Alliger & Stone-Romero, 1994). Work centrality involves hard work, determination, persistence and career focus, which was a universal feature amongst all participants. There is a positive relationship between work centrality, work satisfaction, and organisational and work

commitment (Herrbach et al., 2009; Mannheim, 1993; Schmidt & Lee, 2008), which is supported by this research.

The research findings support the perception that women with no children put work at the centre of their lives, unlike women with children, who survive mainly by managing work-life balance, as discussed in 6.2.4 above. Participants 3, 4, 6 and 10, who are single, are good examples of how women with no children can use this to their advantage and leverage success faster than their counterparts with divided loyalties do. P3 relayed*, "… in a certain sense, I would be the first one to say it may have been easier for me to devote my attention fully to my work than balance it with family life and children, and everything else that goes with children. I think that is a factor and there are women who do it successfully."* Similarly, P4 reiterated the same sentiments as P3*, "...for me it was studies, until the post doc fellowship, so as a student, there were no family commitments, and my work was my life. I do not have children and I only got married last year. So yeah, my life was my work".* Lastly, P6 stated that *"… things are in direct proportion to what you sacrifice to achieve them; it might not look like I have made a lot of sacrifices for me to get to where I am. I'm 61 nearly 62, I'm single, so I don't have a husband or children, maybe that's part of that sacrifice, so on the other hand, I've got different rewards and not* necessarily material rewards, so it's been a very enriching and fulfilling career."

These women obviously had made work and their studies the centre of their lives, sacrificed relationships, marriage and having children. Participant 4 stated that she only got married at 49 years, after achieving her PhD postdoctoral fellowship, and is now vice dean of a faculty and a professor. P3 and P6 in their sixties, both unmarried, and no children. Participant 1, on the other hand, is an example of a married woman with no children, who also survived in academia by making work the centre of her life. She relayed that, *"… I love my work, I am married, but have no children".*

The results of this study therefore support the proposition that women who value their work will advance in their careers, without making a statement about women who prefer to juggle competing priorities. These women have all demonstrated internal drive, passion for their fields of study, grit, determination to succeed, and the willingness to make sacrifices and compromises.

6.6.2 Career planning

To advance in academia up to the level of a professor is linked in part to early career choices and planning (Soliman, 1998). These could include the following: whether to juggle full-time teaching and postgraduate studies, whether to complete one's PhD before embarking on an academic career, whether to do a postdoctoral fellowship before becoming an academic, whether to have children, and whether to focus on either teaching or research, or both (White, 2004). This is another area of interaction between sacrifices and compromises and career planning.

In this research, while some women academics (P3, P4 and P10) may have prioritised studying and research until PhD, other women academics (P2, P5, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12 and P13) had families by the time they decided to be academics, and thus had to juggle the work-life balance more than others. Some of these women academics tackled patriarchy head on (P1, P7, P11 and P12), thereby managing to reach the associate professor and professor level. Appendix C of the research report provides verbatim extracts of the participants' responses and how each participant carved their own career path.

6.6.3 Sacrifices and compromises

Participant 6 stated, "*Things are in proportion with what you are willing to sacrifice to achieve them"*, referring to herself as having made many sacrifices to be where she is. She sacrificed being married, having kids, her family life and social life in general. Her life is work. Similarly, P4 said, "*for me it was studies until postdoctoral level, and I didn't have family commitments, work was my life*". Again, P3 said, "*it may have been easy for me to devote my attention fully to my work and studies as I didn't have to balance it with competing interests such as a husband and children. I was a full-time student until I completed my Master's."*

From these narratives, one thing is common, namely that these women academics paid a price for their success, and this price was the sacrifices that they were willing to make, such as postponing the possibility of marriage and delaying the decision to have

children, as these decisions were understood in terms of their potential to derail these women's career development trajectories.

Similarly, P5 made a decision to postpone her studies in order to become a good single mother to her children. Likewise, P2 was a late starter because of domestic demands, but as soon as she spotted an opportunity that resonated with her desire to succeed in terms of her career, she took it and never looked back. Then again, P13, though she started with a marriage that failed, which left her with three children to raise alone, she never stopped following her dream of being successful in academia, and she therefore studied until PhD level, and only remarried after getting her PhD.

6.6.4 Discipline

From the analysis, P3, P4 and P10 recommended that women academics incorporate some structure into their daily planning. Participant 3 further highlighted the importance of a secretary. Both P3 and P10 mentioned the important role of a daily planner and activity list in work-life balance. Participant 5 works weekends, although this comes at the expense of family time. Participants 7 and 2 also reiterated that whilst doing their PhDs, they would sacrifice holiday time. It therefore becomes clear that discipline, which is crucial for work-life balance, remains a thorny issue for women academics. However, they use resources at their disposal to find the balance, as well as exercising strict discipline.

Participant 10 emphasised the importance of a diary and of sticking to it and being less social. This demonstrates the interplay between career planning, sacrifices, and discipline.

> *I mean every day; I have a checklist from a day to a week to a year, to make sure I have achieved what I wanted to achieve. You need to understand that I do not socialise a lot, I have very few good friends and all of them are abroad, but I do connect with them. So I end up spending more of my time at work…*" Similarly, P3 highlighted the importance of putting some structure into your day and your week, in order to organise your work, "*I try to sort of arrange my day. I am a very early morning person, so I am at the office every morning 6 o'clock.*

Every morning I am here at the office. In addition, usually I manage to do what I must do by 1 o'clock for three days of the week and then another two days I have classes in the afternoon and then I have to stay longer. I organise my time in the office as productively and as economically as possible, to fit in all my appointments. In addition, of course, post-graduate student appointments are done individually, so I have the help of a wonderful secretary who organises my diary, and I feel like I can organise my appointments and interactions with staff and students as economically as possible. So that three days of the week I can actually finish at 1 o'clock and then I can work at home in the afternoons and that quiet time is very important to me, and of course, the evenings." In a different manner and quite interestingly, P7 referred to the importance of disciplining your body and mind, and of watching your diet and stress levels. She relayed that, "*I look after my health, I go to the gym, I watch my diet, but not as much as I go to the gym. I manage my stress levels; I have a positive mind-set. I do not allow people to put me down. I maintain good relations and collegial relations with people at work and outside.*

From this, it becomes clear that to succeed, we have to decide from the onset how much effort we are going to put into our work, how much time we are going to spend with family and friends, and how we are going to look after ourselves. Participant 2 had this advice to offer regarding discipline:

How you do it, and what time you should be up, is up to you, and if your family requirements need you to be away from the office in the afternoon, but tonight when the kids are in bed, I will spend some time on writing an article, then it's fine… Over the weekend, we were talking about working hard in a social gathering and I said that the thing about being an academic is that it never stops, because there is always another article or book to read or, you know, a new technology that I would like to acquire. Therefore, there is never a point where I can sit back and say 'okay, I really have nothing to do.' There is always something to do. Even if it is something you want to do for yourself, like over the December vacation, I had to examine a PhD thesis, so there is always something to do. Moreover, because of that, I think being responsible employees of the institution; they must also trust us in terms of flexibility. In

addition, I think that kind of flexibility will particularly help female academics a lot. If they feel guilty, they don't have to feel guilty because they have to now pick up their children from school and spend some time at home in the afternoon with family, because then tonight I can do what I have to do. So then particularly Human Resource departments at universities, I find they are trying to be like businesses.

From this advice, I gather that there is little rest for academics. Although weekends and holidays are still there, the work never ends, but flexibility is key. It is also important to discipline yourself so that you maintain the work life-balance, which is another area where organisations can offer support, by introducing flexible work arrangements that accommodate the different stages of their women academics' career development, while simultaneously assisting them to maintain the work-life balance. This will ensure that nothing suffers whilst they are pursuing their career development goals.

6.7 THEME 4: DIFFERENTIAL NON-LINEAR CAREER DEVELOPMENT STAGES AND PATTERNS

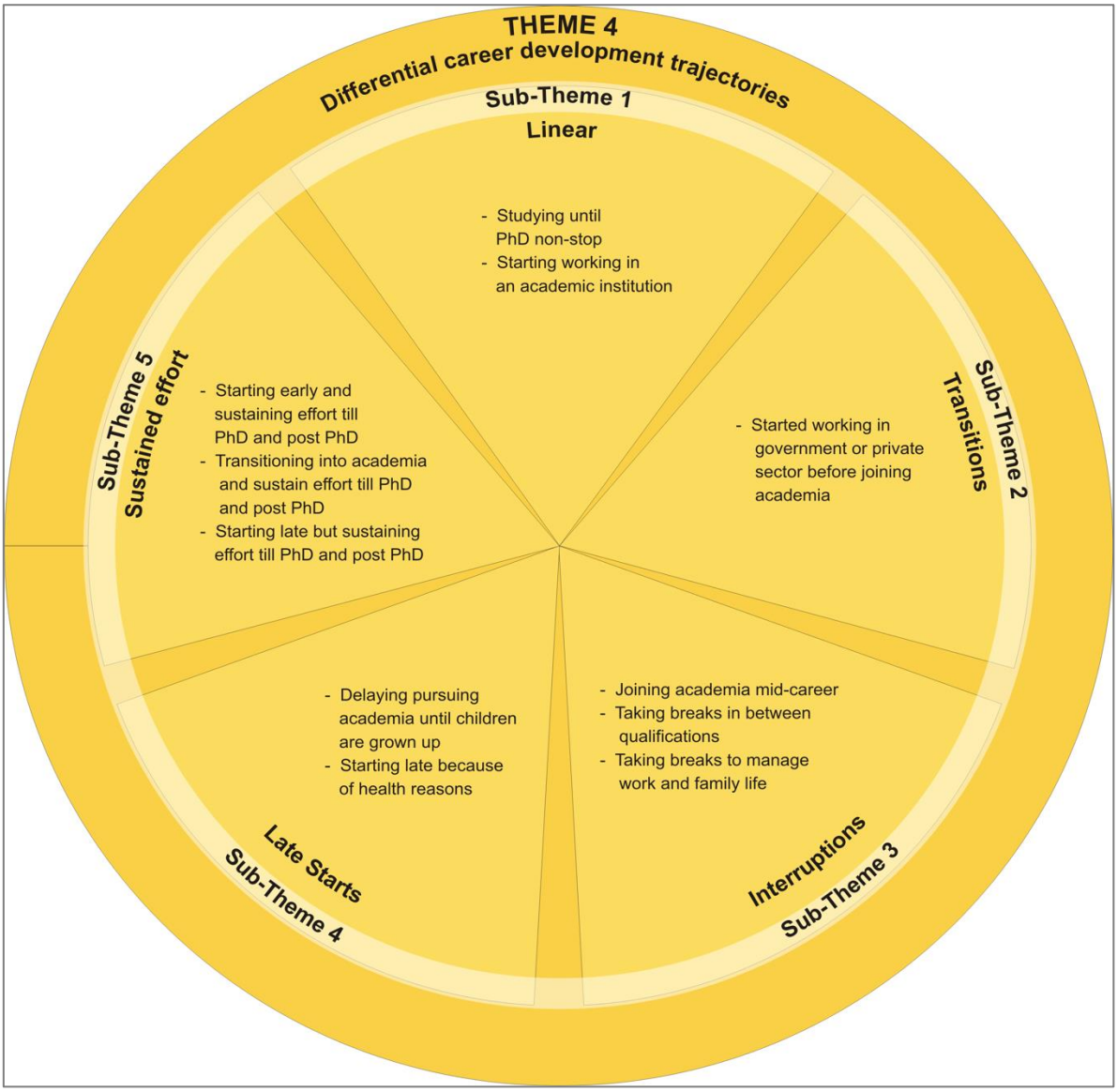

Figure 6.5: Differential non-linear career development stages and patterns

The data analysis revealed that not all the career development trajectories of senior women academics followed a standard linear career model. A typical linear career model would be characterised by hierarchy and external definitions of success (Baruch, 2004; Hall, 1996; Kanter, 1989). Traditional linear career models pinpoint growth and progress at specific hierarchical levels (Buzzanell & Goldzwig, 1991). Buzzanell and Goldzwig (1991) further stated that metaphors used for hierarchy imply a trajectory starting at the bottom or baseline level and working up the pyramid. Such career pyramids presume progression, orderliness, and rational hierarchies based on

skill attainment and competence, with built-in competitive incremental stages (Kanter, 1989).

Though most of the women academics had non-linear career development trajectories, women academics who have followed the linear career development model (P3 and P4) were also evident in this study and were mainly women academics who never took a break during their career progression. They started from the bottom until PhD level, and their careers started as academics. They seemed to have decided much earlier in their career lives about pursuing an academic career.

Among the participants, I noticed two high-flyers, that is, women academics who were ahead of their age in terms of the linear career development models (Ismail et al., 2005; Levinson, 1978; Super, 1957). One example P10, who had achieved an associate professorship by the age of 35. According to Super (1957), at that age, a person is expected to be in the establishment stage, yet she was already in the maintenance stage. Another example is P9, who became a full professor before the age of 40. What is interesting in both cases is that they made career transitions, in that their careers did not begin in academia, but they managed to reach these targets through sustained effort. Participant 9's story defeats the myth that women, especially blacks, who are married with children lag behind their single counterparts with no children.

This research revealed differential development trajectories for different women academics, ranging from linear to interrupted. An interrupted career trajectory is characterised by ad hoc breaks in the career trajectory since it started, late starts, transitions and sustained effort. Not all participants started working in academia and this resulted in what can be defined as a late start in academia. However, even late starters and those who had career transitions managed to progress with sustained effort.

Table 6.1 below categorises the career development trajectories of the participants. Verbatim excerpts from their narratives are provided to support the finding. Five different career development trajectories have been identified and constructed, namely linear, transitions, interrupted, late starts and sustained effort. Some participants' career trajectories incorporate more than one trajectory type, as some trajectories logically interact with each other.

Table 6.1: *Career development trajectories of participants in the study*

Trajectory	Verbatim extracts from participants
Linear	*"I studied until Master's, then my first job was a lecturer at the university and I registered for PhD immediately".* (P3) *"I only got my first job as the lecturer after PhD and postdoctoral fellowship*". (P4)
Late starters	"*I had a late start as my career trajectory was marked by interruptions, as I had four children and a husband to look after. My academic career started in the early thirties.*" (P2)
	"I fell pregnant at the age of 16 whilst doing matric and my father did not have money for me to proceed with my studies, although my matric results were exceptionally good". (P11)
	"I had a late start in life generally, and graduated late because of sickness. I had my first period at 21, and at the age of 26, I was doing matric". (P12)
	"I did my primary school up to high school in non South African country. It was during the era of XYZ in our country – a brutal dictator and my brothers died under him. So, despite the good family background, we were now left with pain. At the age of 18, I went into exile. This was the time when one of my brothers was shot in the city centre. I went to Kenya then Zambia and I continued with my studies doing university education. In two years' time, Ide Amin was thrown down by the Tanzanians and we all went back home. I worked in various companies. I wrote the speech of the 1st lady, attended a women's conference in Nairobi − the second international women's conference. The husband of the 1st lady was overthrown during this time. Then Nairobi became the 2nd exile. I later went to Sweden with the children."(P13)
Transitions	"*"I had an early start in life, although my career did not begin in academia. My career began in government, and I only joined the academic world in my thirties. I was not an academia when I started working, there was a number of careers and eventually I joined academia."* (P1)
	"*No, my first job was in industry, at a company called FUJI, I worked in the sales and marketing department. I was an account officer for 18 months. I had an Honours degree, so I felt it was not more of what I wanted. That is when I left for UJ*. (P5)
	"I did my Junior Degree in Social work, and after completing I was employed by the South African Motor Corporation. I was their HR Practitioner there and most of my responsibilities were around employee assistance because of my social work background, doing a bit of IR (Industrial Relations)". (P9)
	"My first job was two jobs. I was working for a computer company doing quality assurance, it was in Rivonia. However, at the same time I always did waitressing, in the evenings after classes and on weekends. After all, we were taught money is money; it is not dirty, so long as it can buy. I also had my fair share of good and bad jobs without being selective." (P10)
	"*I started my career journey as teacher at a farmschool in Tarkastad in the Eastern Cape."* (P11)
	"I first started working as a teacher at McArthur for two years teaching history and Xhosa. At some stage, I assisted in teaching Afrikaans. I thought I would immediately enrol for Honours, but due to work pressure, I was unable. I enjoyed teaching. Whilst I was doing teaching, I got a letter from a senior lecturer from the XYZ university about a vacant junior lecturer position, with application forms attached. Apparently, the position was advertised on the newspaper, but at that time I had no exposure or little knowledge about job adverts on newspapers. This is the lecturer that aspired me to be the Xhosa specialist, although to me that time the idea of a specialist was limited only to high school teaching, not knowing there's other avenues. (P8)

Trajectory	Verbatim extracts from participants
Interruptions	"*I had a late start as my career trajectory was marked by interruptions, as I had four children and a husband to look after. My academic career started in the early thirties.*" (P2)
	"*I started my academic career in 1997 at UJ. It was so tough I wanted to leave. I thought I would be a doctor by age 35. So I got it when I was 44. When I was doing my honours in 1992. I had a mission, and my mission was that when I complete my Honours, I will go into Master's. I was so ambitious. From doing my first degree at University of Venda to Wits, it's ambition. I was lucky at honours level, I got bursaries HSRC, and they are the ones for women. They encouraged women to be in research. So I did Master's at RAU because I was discouraged to do Master's at Wits having obtained 50%, this was between 1999 to 2001. But then I became a mother in 2002..." (P5)*
	"*What was consistent I took my studies as something normal despite interferences." (P13)*
	"*After getting the linguistics Masters, ideas started to pop up. I got married in 1980, after coming back from England. Continued to teaching, got promoted to senior lecturer, I developed syllabus. I set high standards, upgraded syllabi to have an international touch and produced proud graduates. I got senior lecturer married with two kids. I presented conference papers and published. I didn't register PhD immediately.*" (P8).
Sustained effort	"I *was called for an interview; I was appointed on condition I register for Honours part time. I didn't know that as a staff member there was a study subsidy. I did my Honours in one year, I became a lecturer. I then got a sponsor from British council to study Masters in England."* (P8)
	"*I kept on studying so by that time I achieved my Master's degree, I got a position at Vista. I realised for the first time in my life what I wanted to do, I just realised that I wanted to become an academic. When I started teaching at Vista and that was in my early 30s, so I really enjoyed being academic and working at the university. We then moved to Bloemfontein and there I worked under a male dean, who was very supportive and every year when did my performance appraisals he would state to me, you did very well this year, but I cannot promote you because you haven't achieved your Doctorate. So if you want promotion in your career you will have to do a Doctorate, so then I said let me do that*." (P2)
	"So *I think that as part of my story, is that one day when I retire and they grade my post they [are] going to find something really difficult, because I had adhominum promotions from technician to lecturer to senior lecturer, and now associate professor. I did not apply for an academic post; rather I did the work and never asked for a promotion. I was offered the promotions. But if you enjoy the work the rewards come to you.*" (P6)
	"*It is determination to succeed that made me complete my Masters. The supervisor encouraged me to enrol for PhD, and Technikon funding was available to finance my studies. I had enough days to take sabbatical leave and there was NRF funding. I took one year to do fieldwork and write up my thesis. It took me two years to complete my PhD. At the time I started the PhD my son was four years old, and already started at pre-primary school.*" (P7
	"*So I started helping with assistant tutor for second year module students and towards the end of the year there was a post advertised, so then I applied and went through the interviews and I got the job and joined the University − it was in the year 2000 as a Lecturer. And I had to work on my Masters but now that I was here I also thought of starting a family, and because of that my Masters took longer to complete. I ended up completing in 2005. Nevertheless, the other thing is that I had to go and complete my internship, so I was meant to do an internship full time and the university supported me for that. Then after I decided to take a leave and focus on my family like getting married, having children, getting a house, and so forth. What I also like about having joined this department it was like a blessing because I had many matured seniors who were willing to mentor me and encourage me, so in that I was able to have a good relationship with my supervisor. In addition, he was able to expose me into consulting, gave me necessary skills and we started consulting together. So then time went on, I decided to do my Doctorate…" (P9)*

Trajectory	Verbatim extracts from participants
	"*I did pre-Master's which is their Honours. I wanted something that was fresh, that was relevant. Therefore, from there I did my Master's, paid my own fees without the help of family. It was quite expensive. My family only funded me until degree level, post-degree you had to pay yourself. So it happened that after Master's I went back to work in 2008. I was particularly interested in buying into South African franchises. I was not sure yet if I wanted to come home. However, after the company I was working for disappointed me, they appointed someone else from the UK who was also running for the same position, because I was a foreigner. In addition, that again became a turning point for me. I remember coming back home for a month to visit and when I went back, I decided to come back and pursue my PhD studies. I had numerous offers from different institutions in South Africa and abroad in the UK. I had offers from UJ, UP, UCT, Stellenbosch, NMMU, Ashton University. In addition, it happened that Boston was willing to fund my living costs, tuition and all my international travels. So I chose to study there, and because I did my Master's there. They had my results and they wanted me back. Therefore, I studied in England and everything was paid for*. (P10)
	"I was a senior lecture at UP. I applied for associate professor here. I do not usually move horizontally, I move vertically. I do not measure success by going broad, I only measure it by if I'm going upwards. Hence, I came here. So when I arrived here, there was no department yet, they were busy restructuring. Then I became an acting HOD for the whole year. From there I grew and learned things on a management level. I was later interviewed and got the position of Head of Department". (P10)
	"*I joined NMMU with a national diploma studying towards a degree, then I did a further diploma in Education. After this, I did an Honours degree, and this is when my academic career started. My goal has always been to teach maths to children of African descent, because of the low mathematic output. My Masters research was focused particularly on this. When I was at NMMU I worked with researchers from Canada and US, and this developed my research interest. We co-wrote three papers on culture and its influence focusing on townships and urban areas. At that time at NMMU there were still PhDs offered by M graduates, and I decided I will never do my PhD at NMMU. I then applied for a Fulbright Scholarship in 2006 to study PhD, and this had a huge impact on my life"*. (P11)
	"*I finished Master's in 1998 over a year; I was more resilient through thick and thin. In 1999 I started my PhD proposal."* (P12)
	"*I did my first degree by the time I was in Sweden. I was then admitted to Comparative Education and ventured into UN international bodies and donor agencies servicing Africa and so on. I finished my Masters in Sweden and enrolled for PhD. By this time, I was married with three kids. I divorced soon and brought up children as a single mum. After finishing my PhD, I remarried a man from Holland, and then we came to Africa.*"(P13)

Participants 3 and 4 are examples of linear career progression that was stable and sustained. Participant 3 started working after her Master's degree, P4 only started working after she completed a post-doctoral fellowship programme. She is now married, at nearly 50 years of age, and is therefore a late starter in marriage. The advantage of P3 and P4 is that they started working at the university, and they made the decision early on to be academics. On the other hand, P6 is an example of an academic who, though an early starter and achiever, as she only started working after her Master's degree, took a long break before she deciding to do her PhD, and this determined when she got her associate professorship, which was only in her 60s. On the contrary, P10, another early starter, started her career in industry and academia. She had a degree by age 20, and still took a break, but international exposure inspired her to study further. She was the youngest of the participants, in her thirties, and was already an associate professor. She reported, however, that she was the eldest in the UK, as people there get their PhD degrees early in their careers, since they do not take breaks. Participant 5 had interruptions due to childbearing and being a single mother with no support systems, but by the age of 44 she had her PhD degree.

Participant 1, married with no children, was an early starter whose career life began in government, and she only joined the academic world in her thirties. Her late start in academia was due to the shift from government, by which time she had two Master's degrees. She occupied senior positions in government, coupled with international exposure, but she started at the bottom in academia, from being a part-time lecturer whilst doing her PhD degree. Although she started in government, she had a sustained career progression, and after the completion of her PhD degree, she never stopped and became a full professor in her 40s.

Participants 2, 11 and 12 are all examples of late beginnings and interruptions. However, through sustained effort, perseverance and hard work, they managed to catch up, which demonstrates another interplay of variables. Participant 2 reported having a late start due to raising children and family responsibilities that took up most of her time. Nonetheless, even with the interruptions, she continued to register until she got her Master's degree. This opened a position for her at Vista University, and then she realised that she wanted to become an academic. Surprisingly, P2 became DVC in two academic institutions during her career journey and attributed her success

to the supportive male leaders that she reported to. Although she divorced after the completion of her PhD degree, she remarried and is now a professor in the department, and because she wanted to pay attention to her second marriage, she declined another term as DVC. Although P11's trajectory was marked by delays due to teenage pregnancy, she managed to progress and become a professor by the age of 50. On the other hand, by the time P12 started working, she had a 9-month child and was studying full-time, with her age working against her due to her childhood illness, which resulted in a late start. All these participants' stories refute linear progression in career development.

Participant 9, for example, started working in industry, entered academia as a tutor whilst doing her Honours degree, and moved up the ranks, whilst simultaneously managing a work-life balance. Even though she started in academia after her industrial experience, she had a sustainable and stable career development, such that in her 40s she is already a full professor and is married with children. Similarly, P8, P11 and Participant12 started working as teachers and then moved on to being lecturers at universities. Participant 8's career was disturbed after marriage and children, and there was a divorce and workplace challenges. Consequently, she only completed her PhD dream in her 60s, through perseverance and determination, and is now a postdoctoral fellow.

6.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, I presented the results and described the four main themes, together with their underlying sub-themes and categories, as they were constructed from the data. Since this is a CGT study, new categories emerged that were not previously discussed in the theory chapters, yet the theory impacted on how I interpreted the data and sought meaning and understanding from the participants' career narratives. This chapter also sought to shed light on the four themes identified and their impact on the career development of academic women.

The categories that were constructed were discussed at great length, and excerpts from the participants' responses were presented to illuminate the findings. The following categories were conceptualised: enabling and constraining factors in the

success of women in academia; intrapsychic factors and how they influenced the career development of women; behavioural patterns of successful women in academia; and lastly, differential non-linear career development trajectories. From the responses of the participants, it became clear that family, which includes parents and siblings, has played a very important role in the shaping of women academics' attitudes towards their careers early in life. In addition, opportunities brought about by exposure through geographical location were discussed, and the role played by community leaders and financial aid institutions in the career development trajectory of women academics was found to be significant. It is worth noting that even women academics coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, with the help of role models and mentors, together with financial support from HEIs, have overcome the barriers of their background.

Furthermore, where they started working, networking opportunities and mentoring received early in their career were cited as having played a significant role in instilling the desire to become academics, coupled with role models, international exposure, and good organisational support networks. In this chapter, I also observed the difficulty experienced by working women academics in balancing competing priorities, as they experienced serious challenges in attempting to balance their work and private lives, such that success, in most instances, was followed by divorce. This chapter also showed that some women academics owe their success to work centrality, where they just decide to put work at the centre of their lives, and to make sacrifices and compromises, such as delaying marriage or deciding not to have children, or both.

For me, the participants' narratives highlighted that their career stories are closely linked with their love stories, because I learned that these women academics do not give up on love, even after two divorces - they are still willing to give love a second or third chance.

CHAPTER SEVEN
TOWARDS A SUBSTANTIVE THEORY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN ACADEMICS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

There is the strong feminist critique that contends that women's lives were studied from a positivist paradigm using quantitative research approaches, which are culture-bound and thus remain thought provoking when transposed directly onto other contexts. I join this discussion at a time when social constructionism as an epistemology promises to give voice to the voiceless and is strongly advocated for, in lieu of its impending contribution to the field of career psychology, as evidenced by theorists such Mainiero and Sullivan (2006), Mainiero and Gibson (2018), Savickas (2013) and Sharf (2010). This chapter describes how this research intended to add to the debate by developing a career development theory that supports and expands on the career construction principles from the perspective of the career trajectories of successful women academics in South Africa. The focus of this chapter is thus on presenting a substantive career development theory within specific contextual boundaries.

The nature and significance of the substantive theory of career development that is proposed in this chapter is based on the themes that were constructed from the data. However, it is also based on a paradigmatic orientation and approach to the study of the career development of women in South Africa. The chapter therefore commences by presenting a critique of traditional career theories and their relevance to women's careers, which forms the basis for arguing in favour of an Afrocentric orientation and approach to the study of South African women's careers. An Afrocentric approach increasingly influenced my thinking as the data analysis evolved and I believe now it forms part of the basis for constructing the substantive career development theory that describes the career development trajectories of senior women academics in South African HEIs in this study. This is because the study itself was conducted in South Africa and thus contributing to the African career theories. Lastly, the substantive career development theory is presented, integrating the findings with extant literature to identify potential similarities and differences.

7.2 THE RELEVANCE OF TRADITIONAL THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT TO WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The appropriateness of traditional career development theories and their applicability to the South African context have been widely questioned (Chinyamurindi, 2012), as most of these theories are based almost exclusively on studies of male subjects (Erikson, 1968; Levinson, 1978; Schein, 1978). Another possible explanation for the non-acceptance of these theories within the South African context is the methodologies employed to arrive at the findings. Most of these studies employed quantitative surveys (Creed, Patton & Watson, 2002; Stead & Watson, 2017), which poses a limitation to the contextualised meaning of lived experience. Furthermore, using tests in the quest for objective data has resulted in fixed, linear and stable models (Maree & Beck, 2004), which are not appropriate for the South African woman and her challenges. I concur with Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2011), who expressed the view that career development theories developed elsewhere cannot be transferred directly to the South African situation. O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria (2008) and Bimrose, McMahon and Watson (2013) suggested that qualitative research approaches have the potential to enhance our understanding of career development, and qualitative research methods are more suitable for including previously excluded voices, such as those of African women.

From an epistemological perspective, critiques of existing career theory, including the discourse about work and careers, have emerged, specifically from social constructionism (Burr, 1995; Gergen, 2009). The hallmark of these critiques is the questioning of existing theories and underlying assumptions, and thus the call for more context-specific, naturalistic research. The social constructionist critique encourages a relativistic understanding of knowledge, which acknowledges the assumptions that shape the enquiry and the influence of culture. Social constructionist perspectives seek to unpack how knowledge is constructed, by considering the social and political discourses that frame how questions are asked and answered (Blustein et al., 2004).

However, whilst affirmations are made about the non-relevance of some of these western and early career theories and their fitment into the South African or African contexts in general, this study does not advocate for the wholesale abandonment of

these theories. They are in fact valuable and have made a significant contribution to the career development theory globally, however, they should be applied with caution, as they are not generalisable in all contexts, as women themselves are not a homogeneous group. The outcome of the study by Bosch, de Bruin, Kgaladi and de Bruin (2012) bears witness to this. Bosch, et al, (2012) replicated a study that was conducted in India, by Bathnagar and Rajadhyaksha (2000), and the outcome of their study confirmed that studies in the non-western contexts do not provide a common career pattern for men and women in dual career couples. Their study suggested that black women in South Africa, contrary to common belief, do not exhibit non-linear and disjointed commitment to their occupational role. On the contrary, most black women they surveyed in South Africa were found willing to sacrifice family roles, particularly the family role, in pursuit of occupational commitment. Their results confirm the mixed pattern of role salience across non-western countries. There is thus a need to expand thinking about the career development choices that women make, because it is becoming evident that women want different things in life, and so are their career development choices and experiences.

Figure 7.1 below graphically presents the criticisms of the traditional approach to designing (Western) career development theories. Figure 7.1 seeks to demonstrate that traditional career theory predominantly stemmed from a post-positivist research orientation, employing quantitative research methods that were based on an exploration of the career experiences and perspectives of men in Western or Eurocentric contexts, which focused on middle-class/privileged socio-economic status and were based on western meta-theoretical perspectives.

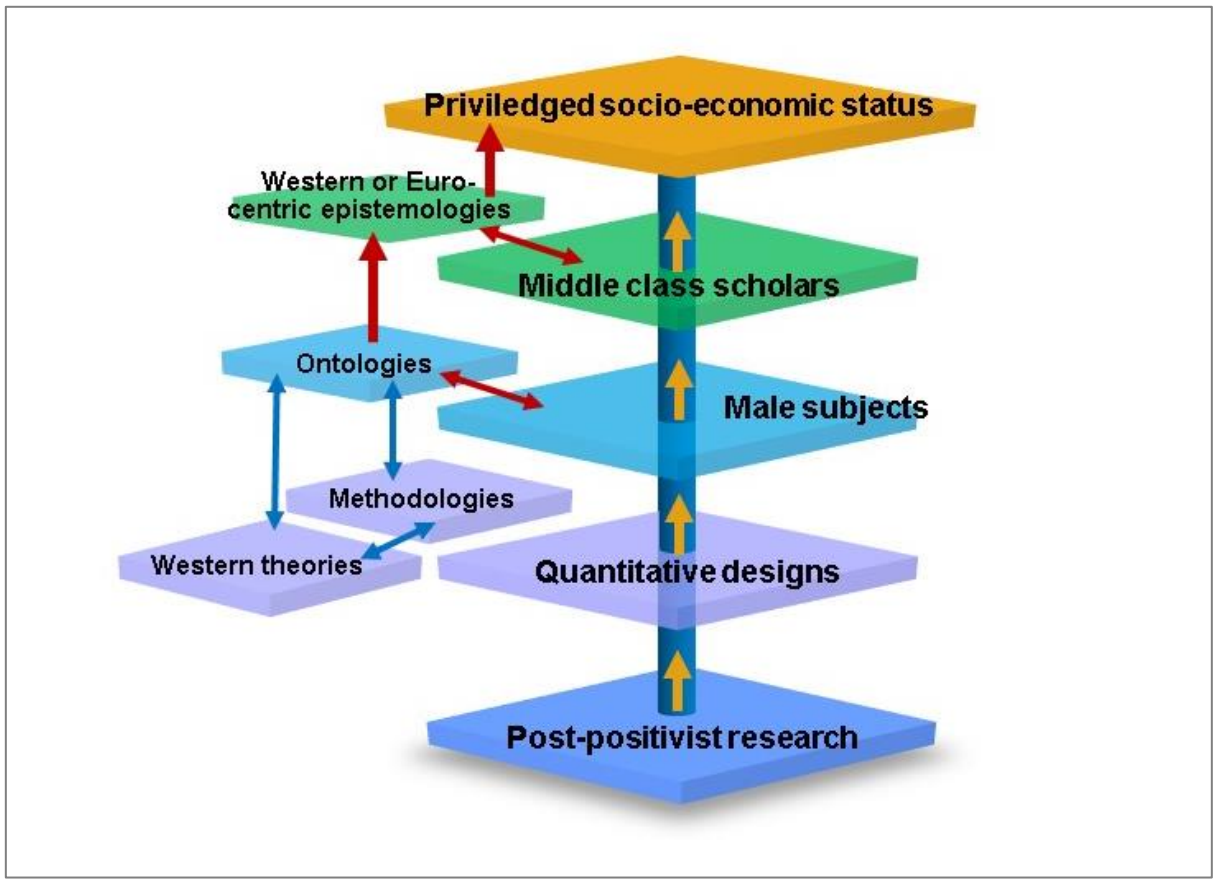

Figure 7.1: The research orientation to traditional career theory

7.3 TOWARDS AN AFROCENTRIC APPROACH TO THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

In view of the failures of the traditional models to accurately depict the career development of women in Africa, the use of indigenous research is recommended to arrive at African context-specific theories. Kim and Berry (1993, p. 2) defined indigenous psychology as “the scientific study of human behaviour or mind that is native, that is not transported from other regions, and that is designed for its people”. The theory that is presented in this chapter is thus context-specific, designed by a South African researcher, taken from South African women academics, and for use and understanding by people within the South African context, as well as women elsewhere who might be operating within similar contexts. Postcolonial indigenous research advocates a process of decolonising and indigenising Euro-Western research methodologies (Chilisa, 2012). Indigenisation is a process that involves a critique of and resistance to the imperialism and hegemony of Euro-Western methodologies, and

which calls for adapting conventional methodologies by including perspectives and methods that draw from the indigenous knowledge, languages, metaphors, worldviews, experiences and philosophies of the former colonised, historically oppressed, and marginalised social groups (Chilisa, 2012). Progress in understanding cultural and ethnic influences on career development has been slow, which translates into the paucity of theoretical models in career development within the South African context. This puts pressure on career researchers in the African context to come up with new models and theories that represent the voice of women on the African continent, which is the imminent contribution of this research. If we take the uniqueness and diversity of Africa as a continent into account, then the South African culture, coupled with differences in women's backgrounds, makes it impossible to have one career theory that explains the career development of women in Africa and South Africa. However, it is still important that as South African researchers, we investigate and understand the everyday world of women's experiences, to contribute to feminist research (Stanley & Wise, 1993). Figure 7.2 below graphically illustrates my approach, which is a proposed Afrocentric approach to studying and constructing career development, as an alternative to the traditional approach discussed in the previous section.

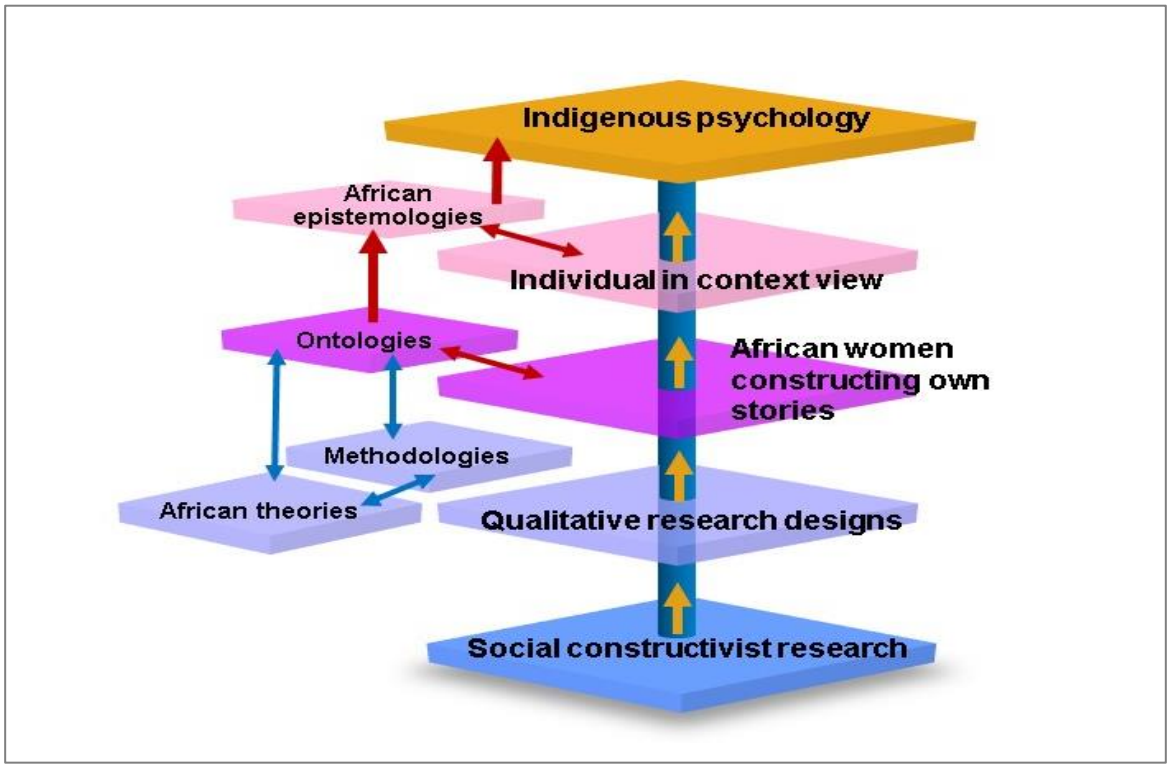

Figure 7.2: The framework used for studying the career development of women in South African HEIs

Based on this Afrocentric research orientation, the proposed substantive theory of career development is discussed below.

7.4 AN EXPLICATION OF A SUBSTANTIVE THEORY OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORIES OF SENIOR WOMEN ACADEMICS

When embarking on a grounded theory study, there are the two different kinds of theory that need to be considered; substantive and formal theory. An understanding of the distinction between these two types is necessary when conducting research aimed at developing a GT. Corbin and Strauss (1990) argue that substantive theory is tailor-made from the study of a phenomenon situated in one particular (specific) social setting or the subjects being studied. On the other hand, a formal theory is less specific to a social setting, and it has a greater claim on generalisation of research results which might be adapted to many contexts or other experiences (Remenyi, 2014). A single grounded theory research study would not be expected to generate formal theory (Gasson, 2004). Formal theory emerges over time (Glaser, 1978) and with reflection (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). For a theory to be accepted as formal it needs to have previously been considered substantive across multiple research studies (Remenyi, 2014).

Substantive theory is therefore context specific theory that is socially constructed whose main aim is to describe the phenomenon studied (Charmaz, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Theory can have a multitude of meanings, which may not be easily reconcilable at times, making it a concept that is open to wide appropriation (Adams, Cochrane, & Dunne, 2012). According to May (2001), it can explain and understand the findings of research, by means of a conceptual framework that makes 'sense' of the data. Theory denotes any coherent description and explanation of observed phenomena, which provides a testable, verifiable or falsifiable representation of social relationships (Kettley, 2013). Theorising should thus be viewed as an attempt to expand ways of thinking about a particular phenomenon, as it generates new ways of thinking about the way in which the world is constructed, in the hope that it will throw light on the phenomenon. It may or may not be generalisable or transferrable to a multitude of new concepts or contexts. With this understanding forming the basis of my

thinking, I present a substantive theory constructed within the HE context, with selected senior women academics in South African HEIs, which fits the general description of theory provided above.

The proposed career development theory that I constructed from the research findings fits the category of substantive theory, as it is a context-specific theory that is socially constructed, whose main aim is to describe the phenomenon being studied (Charmaz, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Thus, what is presented in this chapter is a substantive theory that is constructed within the HE context in SA to present enabling and constraining environments associated with successful women academics, intrapsychic factors impacting on the success of women academic, the behavioural patterns of women academics identified in this research and non-differential career development trajectories that are not age-related. The theory will be useful to women aspiring to be professors, in that it provides guidance on how they can construct their own career development trajectories going forward, based on their phase or stage in life. Lastly, I integrate the proposed substantive theory with previous extant literature to show how I have built on existing relevant career theories in developing the substantive theory proposed in this study. The proposed substantive theory is therefore also constructed from similarities in the research findings and previous research.

In summary, there are principles in the conventional career theories extrapolated from the career development theories studied in Chapter 5 of this thesis, that I have found applicable and useful in understanding women's career trajectories. These principles are that:

(i) A career is a life process that flows through certain stages;
(ii) Career stages are characterised by specific needs, goals, tasks and outcomes to advance to the next stage;
(iii) An individual's career orientation, decisions as well as self-efficacy is impacted by societal norms;
(iv) Internal (e.g. self-concept, personality preferences) and external factors (opportunities, socialisation experiences, role models etc.) impact career decisions and orientation;

(v) Congruence between internal needs and goals and career context leads to job satisfaction and progression;

(vi) There are diverse career patterns;

(vii) Environmental influences impact on the careers, career development and career choices of women;

(viii) Most of the career theories have been developed by men about men, but later theories challenged this impact and highlighted the need for different perspectives on career content and processes for women.

This proposed career development theory is depicted in Figure 7.3 below in the form of an integrated conceptual framework. This framework is closely aligned to the findings presented in chapter six and includes enabling and constraining environments associated with successful women academics, intrapsychic factors affecting the success of women academics, and behavioural patterns of women academics that were identified in this research, as well as the differential career development trajectories of women academics.

Figure 7.3: An integrated framework of the career development trajectories of senior women academics

Based on the integrated theoretical framework presented in Figure 7.3 above, this section discusses the substantive career development theory. The theory represents the different phases of career development of women based on their career development trajectories, and I show how women aspiring to be professors can construct their own career development trajectories going forward. Throughout this section, I reflect on the substantive theory by integrating the findings with extant literature on the concepts that form part of the substantive theory, which creates a framework for the career development trajectories of women academics.

In summation, this substantive career development theory incorporates the elements presented in the framework (i.e. enabling and constraining factors, intrapsychic factors, behavioural patterns, career development phases and career development

trajectories), and highlights the interplay between these elements. I further elaborate on each of these elements and how they interact, as well as their impact on the career development trajectories of women academics.

What follows in the subsections below is a description of how each theme contributed to a holistic understanding of the career development trajectories of senior women academics. The theory integrates the themes with a broad spectrum of patterns identified in this research.

7.4.1 Enabling and constraining factors impacting on the career development trajectories of women academics

It became evident in this research that enabling and constraining factors are interrelated in terms of their ability to explain the career development trajectories of senior women academics.

The impact of family on the career development trajectories of these senior women academics is evident from the research findings, as family (which includes parents and siblings) have acted as role models, nurturers and encouragers. Consistent with Patton and McMahon (2014), the research demonstrated that career development experiences were not the same for children who grew up in a family where their parents' life orientation provided opportunities, whether through their professions or involvement in politics or business. Children who grew up in rural areas or townships, whose experiences are limited to local experiences, could have been expected to have a narrow view of life and limited social awareness. However, the results show that the participants have transcended their boundaries, which impacted their career development trajectories. Furthermore, this research revealed the significant impact that having siblings with a broader exposure to life, through attending boarding school and travelling extensively, could have on the career choices of their younger siblings, which is consistent with Blustein et al. (1997).

In addition, the findings of this research are aligned with Friedman's (1991) research, which found that families contribute to work progress. According to Friedman, family conflict is experienced when the employee has any of the following: a disapproving

spouse; inequalities in the marriage; an unequal division of labour at home; children; unstable childcare arrangements; and elder care responsibilities, especially when relatives live at a distance. Though Friedman's (1991) study was conducted more than two decades ago, the results of this research supported his propositions. Family support from spouses, children and domestic helpers seemed to play a facilitating role in the academic success of women, while the absence of this support led to divorce, as reported by some of the participants. With reference to Friedman's list, all the participants who were interviewed had experienced one or more of these factors at some point in their career lives. Furthermore, it was evident in this research that children have an influence on the academic career of women. This is in line with Mason and Goulden (2004), who postulated that the effect of academic careers on family formation shows that women who successfully pursue ladder-rank faculty careers are quite different in their patterns of family formation from other women. This research further refuted the perception that married women and women with children struggle more with work-family balance than single women with no children, which reinforces the findings of Aiston and Jung (2015), Duncan et al. (2003) and Greenhaus and Powell (2006). This was evident in this study; as marital status alone was not found to be a constraining factor for women academics. Thus, being married or having children cannot be viewed as a barrier to women's advancement, especially when the husband is supportive.

From the narratives of these women academics, it was clear that HEIs offer flexible work structures, research and development leave, sabbatical leave, and study subsidies, all of which these women academics have access to, and this helps them to manage their work and life. This kind of organisational support is crucial for the advancement of women academics with competing priorities, as well as working under supportive leadership. Women academics mentioned different forms of organisational support that are responsible for academic success, although the extent of their access to these differed in each case. These forms of support included the following: mentoring, leadership support, supervisor support, organisational culture, and policies and programmes. HEIs offer organisational support by integrating work and family life through promoting flexible workplace policies and programmes that, when effectively implemented, can address the specific career needs of women. For instance, sabbatical leave policies allow them time off to focus on their research work, as do

research and development leave policies. An unsupportive organisational climate, as well as the lack of mentoring and unsupportive colleagues, impacts negatively on the career growth of women academics. However, networking was reported to be a facilitator of success in academia. This includes attending international conferences, finding co-authors, and establishing networks for postdoctoral fellowships. Lastly, the role played by supervisors was reported as being influential in launching the academic career path, as well as during the early stages of career development. Participants agreed that as an academic, one must make time available for research, and that, organisationally, there are no obstacles in this regard – one just has to learn to manage one's time, taking into consideration other competing priorities. From another perspective, the responses of the participants made it clear that the institutional climate of South African universities continues to have racist and sexist undertones; long after authors such as Austin (2001), Mabokela (2002), Mabokela (2003), Mabokela and Mawila (2004), Perumal (2003), Potts (2000), Schulze (2005), and Subotzky (1998) reported similar findings. Institutions are also dealing with transformation and policy implementation overload in the current context of changes in the HE landscape, and major societal transformation. Leadership support has been cited as one of the factors that facilitate the success of women academics. This is in line with Barnett and Bradley's (2007) suggestion that organisations that give support to women by introducing workplace policies that are user-friendly have seen many women ascend to the upper echelons in the organisation. This upward mobility presupposes a type of leadership that is sensitive to the changing needs of women.

7.4.2 Intrapsychic factors and their impact on the career development trajectories of women academics

This study confirmed the findings of Bandura (1994), who discovered that people with a strong sense of efficacy approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in work activities. Bandura (1994) held that people with high levels of self-efficacy set themselves challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. The recovery of their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks is quicker, and they attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills. They approach threatening

situations with the assurance that they can exercise control over them. This efficacious outlook leads to personal accomplishments, affects life choices, increases levels of motivation, enhances quality of functioning, strengthens resilience to adversity, and decreases vulnerability to stress and depression. Through their determination to succeed, the women academics participating in this study broke the barriers, and some even ascended to leadership level and are still growing. This is unlike women who respond to barriers of lack of organisational support by avoiding careers in which a higher rate of stereotyping or discrimination occurs (Schwanke, 2013). On the other hand, the women academic participants in this study have prioritised research and tackled patriarchy head on. As a result, they managed to reach the associate professor level and then full professorship. However, there could be those who become worn out by the lack of encouragement and discriminatory practices that prevail in institutions of higher learning (Prozesky, 2008; White, 2004).

Furthermore, from a constructivist perspective, people actively construct knowledge by combining their life experiences with previous knowledge, which supports the idea that grit is a learned construct that can be developed. This could be another reason why none of the women academics referred to their intelligence as having been a predictor of their success, because over and above talent, they need other attributes, such as grit, to succeed. In academia, it is not so much about intelligence the higher you go as it is about qualities such as grit and determination to succeed, which has been my observation and experience. Even those who were not necessarily regarded as gifted and talented have managed to climb the academic career through grit. Grit emphasises long-term stamina rather than short-term intensity (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews & Kelly, 2007). A gritty person is said to not only finish the tasks at hand, but also pursues a given goal over a period. Therefore, some of the features of grit are consistency, perseverance and tenacity.

The results suggest that women academics with a high level of efficacy expectations are more likely to succeed, despite, in some instances, the lack of role models, mentors, supportive organisational cultures, and family support. From the research, it became evident that white women worked in more supportive organisational climates compared to their black counterparts. It seems as if black women need a higher level of self-confidence and determination to succeed, as they experience many obstacles

in climbing the corporate ladder, both at home and at work. Generally, women of all races have to negotiate their different role expectations, as there is a lot of juggling to do, especially for women with husbands and children. Largely, single women with no children have made work their life and attribute their success to the compromises and sacrifices they made, and to taking their career goals seriously.

7.4.3 Behavioural patterns of successful women academics

Planning what you want to achieve in a year, a month, a week and a day is critical for women academics' success. Other women academics succeeded by putting work at the centre of their life and making major sacrifices and compromises. The concept of work centrality refers to the degree of importance that work has in one's life (Paullay, Alliger & Stone-Romero, 1994). Studies amongst successful professionals have highlighted the significance of career centrality (Ismail et al., 2005). Work centrality has been noted to go as far as making the decision to postpone marriage or children, or both. The assumption is therefore that, *other things being equal,* single women academics who prioritise their career over marriage and children will succeed more quickly than women with children who have the same drive, but who, because of competing priorities and the juggling of work-life balance that occurs, must first master work-life balance. Another related assumption is that a married woman with no children has fewer competing priorities than a single or married woman with children.

7.4.4 Non-differential career development trajectories of women academics

As the purpose of this research was to provide a qualitative description of the experiences of senior women academics, the research found that women professors have different career trajectories characterised by sustained early starts, late starts and, in some instances, interruptions, which is in line with McMahon, Watson and Bimrose (2012) and Bimrose and Brown (2015). The analysis showed that not all career development trajectories of senior women academics follow a linear model, which is in sharp contrast to Super's age/stage model of career development (1978). Some women academics had early starts and maintained their momentum, especially where marriage and children were delayed or sacrificed, and thus became professors in their 40s or earlier. In most instances, late starts and interruptions were intertwined

with the stories of others, usually husbands and children, and in one instance, health-related matters. This is consistent with De la Rey (2002), who reported fragmented educational and career patterns in married women's career development trajectories, because of their husband's career movements, as well as childbearing and rearing.
From all the participants' stories, I observed that traditional linear career development models are no longer adequate to explain the development trajectories and progression patterns of all women academics in South Africa HEIs, which is in line with Sullivan and Mainiero (2007). A notable feature of these women's stories is that no matter when their academic careers began, they set the pace of their career trajectories. Once opportunities to succeed were presented to them, they had to decide how they were going to react to them. Furthermore, from the stories of these women academics, I could see how different career development trajectories (linear, transitions, interruptions, late starts and sustained effort), as shown in Table 6.1 of chapter six, are influenced by different factors. Having an early start is not a guarantee of reaching professoriate level more quickly, unless it is accompanied by good career planning and personal goals that are aligned with the set professional goals, which involves a lot of sacrifice and compromise. Similarly, a late start in academia could be circumstantial and does not always translate into women academics reaching professoriate later than everybody else does. Sustained efforts, coupled with supportive organisational climates, will ensure that women academics achieve professorship faster. From these findings, I also noticed that academic success means different things to different people. To some it means being married with children and finding work-life balance, whilst for others, it means sacrificing their social life or delaying the immediate gratification of social needs until work goals have been achieved.

More importantly, it is notable in this study that the presence of women in senior academic positions is not only contingent upon factors such as the availability of a pool of capable and qualified women with relevant doctorates and publication records but should be accompanied by the removal of policy constraints and institutional barriers to professional access (McNeely & Vlaicu, 2010). HEIs can remove these constraints and barriers by offering support to women through policies that integrate work and family life such as flexible workplace policies that when effectively implemented can address the specific career needs of women, whilst allowing for work-family balance.

Policies such as sabbatical leave allow women time off to focus on their research work; research and development leave policies allow employees time off to do research outputs, thereby increasing institutional research output. Furthermore, HEIs can offer financial support to its staff who want to further their studies, using their staff development budgets.

Other way HEIs can remove institutional barriers is by having policies that are against gender discrimination in line with the legislative requirements in the country, as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and the Employment Act, to allow for promotional opportunities that favour employment equity, and redressing past imbalances. As Eagly and Carli (2007) stated, gender discrimination is an organisation-centered barrier, which will take organisational measures to address it. Thus, leadership commitment of HEIs to address these policy constraints and institutional barriers will be measured by level of effort which they exert to tackling these pertinent issues.

7.4.5 Career development phases of women academics

Given that women do not necessarily progress through career stages in a linear and uniform fashion, one can assume that linear models are thus not appropriate in the context of this study, and that the development of each woman is not necessarily restricted to age frameworks, such as proposed by Levinson (1978) and Super (1957, 1977). Individuals in this study have had different life experiences. Therefore, the assumption that people of the same age will be doing similar tasks and activities is a prejudiced assumption. Women are not a homogenous group based simply on their gender. Women may have similar life experiences, yet the similarity of these experiences is not directly related to their chronological (age) life stage. Considering Sharf's (2010) career construction theory, women academics' career life stories reflect predominant preoccupations that are related to each of the developmental stages of career adaptability. In constructing this substantive theory, I built on the work of Sharf (2010) who devised stages of career development, namely: exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement, as well as the work of Coetzee (2014), who identified three core dimensions of psychosocial career preoccupations that are non-age-related, namely: career establishment, career adaptation, and work life

adjustment. Both Sharf (2010) and Coetzee (2014) agreed that preoccupations are different at each stage of development. I integrated these two theories and their dimensions of psychosocial career preoccupations, as I found them to be appropriate in studying women with non-linear career paths. I also found these theories to accommodate women from different backgrounds, such as those of my participants. From this study, I propose five stages of career development for women in South African HEIs, as depicted in Figure 7.4 below. According to the research findings, these career stages are:

- *Career exploration,* which resonates with preoccupations before Masters and PhD;
- *Career establishment,* which resonates with preoccupations during PhD;
- *Career maintenance,* which resonates with life post-PhD;
- *Work-life adjustment phase* is a period of settling down, looking for other stimuli, and finding a balance between social and career life, something that most women academics struggle with. Some women academics at this stage have established careers. They could be focused on maintaining the prestige they have built for themselves. They are now concerned with reduced workloads, delegating and achieving greater harmony between their work and personal life. At this level, their publication records and supervision experience speak for themselves. Furthermore, some women academics at this stage occupy leadership roles. It is at this stage that the focus is on mentoring young and upcoming academics through co-supervision and co-authoring with postgraduate students and attending conferences together. However, other women, even during the exploration and establishment phases, may decide to incorporate their social life, by getting married, having children, and working towards integrating their personal and work lives, allowing them to grow together, instead of just focusing on one aspect. Thus, the work-life adjustment phase might precede the establishment phase, as witnessed by some participants in the study, particularly those who marry early, raise children and focus on their careers later; and
- *Disengagement* − The last phase of *disengagement* is when women academics are planning for their retirement and deciding how to leave a lasting legacy. However, academics do not retire completely - as Badat (2010) postulated,

academics are more productive when they retire. They simply leave formal employment and are contracted, as their human capital is a lifetime investment.

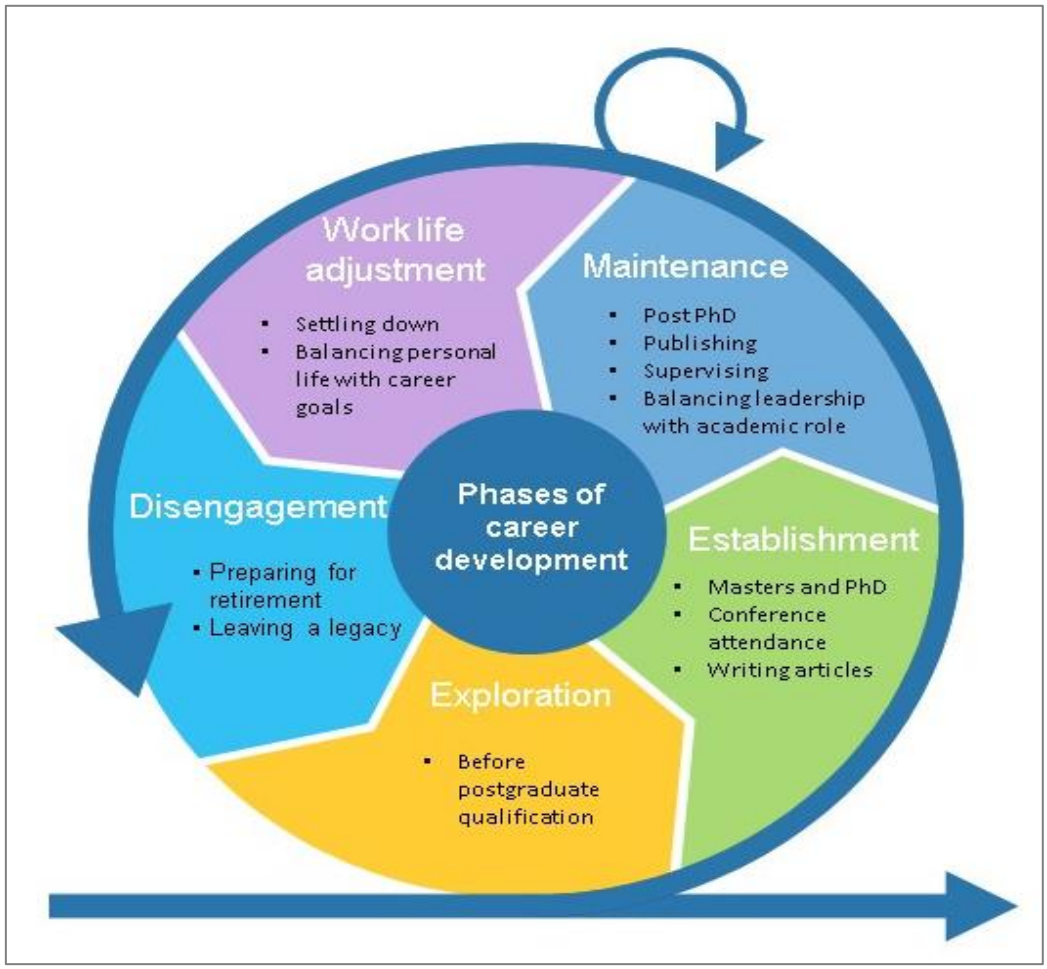

Figure 7.4: Career development phases of women academics

It is important that a distinction is made between women who are high flyers or early achievers, and those with late starts, interruptions and transitions from other environments. Women with sustained early careers in academia, and those who sacrifice family life until later can progress through these stages in a linear way. It is thus notable that for women academics, the stage/phase of their career development is not always related to age, as age and phase of career development do not always tell the same story. From these findings, it became evident that there is an unexplored connection between multiple factors, such as getting married and having children, coupled with the presence or lack of support systems within both families and organisations prevailing in women's social contexts, which affect their career development. Again, this study confirmed Morley and Walsh (1995) as well as

Ramohai's (2019) emphasis on the need for women academics to voice their experiences, and thus construct their own knowledge on issues related to the accessibility of opportunities to women, promotions and career mobility, as well as questions related to the influence of their academic contexts on their promotion and career mobility. Accordingly, there is an interplay between family, organisational, societal and individual factors, as evidenced by the fact that even for those women who started early, the work environment, if not supportive, can result in them taking longer to get promotions, and thus remaining in the establishment stage, rather than proceeding to the maintenance stage. This study also supports the view that women academics should understand their social and psychological factors and organisational climate, as well as their impact on career development, and how these factors work simultaneously to influence their staying power in academia, as no two women academics experience career development in the same way.

In trying to integrate these phases with the emergent categories, the impact of these influences, as depicted in Figure 7.3 above, fluctuates according to the stages or phases of their career journey. For example, whilst external factors (constraining and enabling) are central during the career establishment phase, their significance might diminish during the career maintenance stage. Intrapsychic factors seem to cut across all the phases, as do the behavioural aspects. During the exploration and establishment phases, support systems such as family, organisation, supervisors, networks, and role models play a critical role, as demonstrated in the findings of this study. Nevertheless, during the maintenance stage, it is more about grit, self-efficacy, determination to succeed, looking for opportunities to succeed, and overcoming obstacles. An enabling organisational climate is essential during the maintenance stage, as it might delay promotion opportunities or discourage aspiring women from remaining in academia, with all the investment that has already taken place.

7.5 INTEGRATING ACADEMIC WOMEN CAREER TRAJECTORIES WITH PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Firstly, the study confirmed O'Neil et al.'s (2008) criticism that the existing models developed by theorists such as Levinson (1978) and Super (1980) assumed a series of predictable tasks that happen at more or less predictable times during the course of

an individual's career life. Levinson and Super's theories proposed a linear progression through a series of life stages based on male patterns of behaviour (Doherty & Manfredi, 2010). Typically, these models emphasised individual achievement, continuous employment and progression, which were rejected by this research. On the contrary, the research confirmed the findings of O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005), who discovered that women's career and life responsibilities ebb and flow according to life stage concerns, which must be factored into organisational models of successful careers, in addition to work-related concerns.

Furthermore, the study confirmed the findings of Ogbogu and Bisiriyu's (2012) research, which factored in the impact of broader social or psychological contexts viewed from women's perspectives. Ogbogu and Bisiriyu (2012) asserted that some women are entering academia in their 50's. A distinction therefore needs to be drawn between chronological age and professional age, something that my theorising supports. This is the main reason why career age theories are critiqued within the African context, as they do not talk to the realities that confront women in this context. Some women were late starters because of past societal pressures to marry, stay at home, and raise a family, which rendered their career aspirations unexplored until their children were grown up. Once the children are grown up, the opportunity to return to school for higher degrees or re-enter academia is now available and thus explored, and these women have sustained their late starts. There are also career transitions, where women switch from one environment to another, thus making them late starters in academia, even though they may have been early career starters in general.

Secondly, the study confirmed De la Rey's (2002) finding that women's stories are tied to the stories of others, especially husbands and children. Furthermore, consistent with Mason and Goulden (2002), the results revealed that women academics' behavioural patterns, specifically those who successfully pursue academic careers up to the level of professorship, are reasonably dissimilar in terms of family formation from women who do not pursue academic careers to this level, or women academics who drop out. De la Rey (2002) discovered that senior women academics are less likely to marry and have children, and are more likely to divorce, a finding that was strongly confirmed by this research. Thornton and Young-de Marco (2004) posited that women professors might make conscious decisions to forgo or delay family formation to better their

careers. The authors went on to say that some of these women academics may choose to drop out of the pipeline to marry, have children, or avoid divorce. This was another revelation in this research, as one participant even testified that it was a case of choosing between marriage and professorship, and she chose the latter.

The distance between the stages, from exploration to maintenance, confirmed De la Rey's (2002) finding that academia is a "front-loaded" profession, requiring large investments of time and energy during the early stages. The pressure to increase research output typically coincides with the timing of choices, such as whether to have children. This leads to two main patterns of sequencing: career and then family, or family and then career. According to her, this decision has a great impact on a woman's life-course. From the participants who were interviewed, the same career patterns were prevalent, while for others it was career and then family, and for those who chose to integrate the two, it was either no children, or where there were children, there were interruptions or late starts. The study thus confirmed that participants' career development trajectories entail a series of transitions, decisions and adjustments throughout the lifespan, as opposed to being a single choice, and that career construction changes throughout one's life and constantly evolves, in line with Sharf (2010) and Savickas (2013). These changes subsequently give rise to adaptation and specific career concerns that occupy an individual's mind at that particular time, as posited by Coetzee (2014).

Thirdly, the study confirmed the views of Prozesky (2008) and Geber (2009), who postulated that women, as primary caregivers, have interrupted career paths due to childbearing and child rearing. All the women professors I interviewed agreed that childbearing has the potential to slow down academic progress, and for that reason, some of them made a decision not to have children, or postponed having them, while others started with a family and had late career starts. Other women academics started with careers and later considered marriage and children. However, for some, the career development trajectory was spiral, with detours due to marriage, children, and, in some instances, divorce, while a few had steady and sustained career development. Furthermore, this research confirmed the views of Obers (2014) and Prozesky (2008), who suggested that South African women do their doctoral studies at a later stage than

men do or complete their doctorates while their children are still young, or before they have children.

Fourthly, the research findings disconfirmed the findings of Crossman (2014), who posited that marriage is a site for gender inequality. Much as the research findings confirmed that balancing competing priorities remains a challenge for most women, especially those who are married with children, there is no evidence that marriage alone poses a risk to the career development of women. The lack of support systems makes the challenge greater for both married and single women. The study revealed that inequality still exists in South African households in terms of the burden of home-making, childcare and family roles (Dilworth, 2004; Dilworth & Kingsbury, 2005). The husband-as-resource view does not apply universally. Few married women in this study reported supportive husbands throughout their career development journey. In particular, married women with children, who are juggling competing priorities, regard support systems as essential for success in academia.

At another level, Hollands' theory posits that knowledge of self and of the world of work are sufficient to facilitate the process of career choice (Patton & McMahon, 2014). However, Holland failed to acknowledge the impact of gender role socialisation as a contributing factor to women's continued occupation of low-level jobs. I thus join Patton (2013) and Patton and McMahon (2014) in criticising Holland's theory for assuming a one-size-fits-all approach regarding career choice. The fact that the burden of raising children still rests primarily with the mother has contributed significantly to the slow progress of women academics who are mothers. This research has confirmed the existence of work-family and family-work conflict, which is consistent with Ford, Heinen and Langkamer (2007), who hypothesised that the above two constructs are inseparable.

Fifthly, dealing with antagonistic organisational climates that do not support the diverse roles that women play, continues to constrain women's efforts to succeed. The study confirmed the views of Zulu (2013), who postulated that patriarchy remains a workplace reality in South African HEIs, and that it is part of being a woman academic in South Africa, especially for black women academics. Nonetheless, high levels of efficacy expectations mitigate the impact of the lack of support systems and

unsupportive organisational climates. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is mediated by a person's beliefs or expectations regarding his/her capacity to accomplish certain tasks successfully or demonstrate certain behaviours (Hackett & Betz, 1981). From the very beginning, I found that the women in this study believed they could achieve academic success, and accordingly, their level of effort was informed by their beliefs. Bandura (1977) postulated that these expectations determine whether a certain behaviour or performance will be attempted, the amount of effort the individual will contribute to the behaviour, and how long the behaviour will be sustained when obstacles are encountered. Within the context of careers, self-efficacy expectations refer to a person's beliefs regarding career-related behaviours, educational and occupational choice, and performance and persistence. This research confirmed the findings of Bandura (1994), who discovered that people with a strong sense of efficacy approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered, rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in one's activities. Bandura (1994) held that people with high levels of self-efficacy set themselves challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. The recovery of their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks is quicker, and they attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills. They approach threatening situations with the assurance that they can exercise control over them. This efficacious outlook leads to personal accomplishments, affects life choices, increases levels of motivation, enhances quality of functioning, strengthens resilience to adversity, and decreases vulnerability to stress and depression.

Lastly, the study also confirmed the views of Bagilhole and White (2013), who claimed that the following factors impact the career development of women: influence of family of origin; first generation of study at university; motivation from home and externally; geographical mobility; balancing work and family responsibilities; organisational cultures; ability to challenge prevailing organisational cultures; strategic career planning; availability of mentors; and understanding the rules of the game in the academic profession. The study however also supports the very recent opinion of Ramohai (2019) that despite barriers and challenges, successful women take responsibility for their careers and rely on their intrapsychic strengths to persevere and succeed. Hackett and Betz (1981) posited that whilst there is increased awareness of

the barriers to the career success of women, further investigation of the specific mechanisms by which societal beliefs and expectations become manifested in women's vocational behaviour is needed. Such investigations will not only increase the understanding of women's career development but will also facilitate the design of systematic programmes of intervention capable of increasing women's status and potential for achievement in the labour market, and I concur with this.

7.6 SUMMATIVE DISCUSSION OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT THEORY

It became clear from these findings that there is a pressing need to deconstruct, construct, and reconstruct existing career theories. A career theory for women that will be acceptable going forward is one that acknowledges individual career concerns and women's preoccupations at different points in their lives. There should be room for adaptation within the existing career theories, rather than expecting women to adapt to theories that do not consider women's environments. Women's lives continue to evolve, depending on their stage in life, and they are confronted with internal and external factors. At a certain point in her life, a woman will be more concerned about getting married, giving birth and raising children, whilst at another time; her preoccupation will be her career. On the other hand, another woman will decide to do both at the same time. Interruptions, late starts and transitions should thus be accommodated in career theories for women, as even the most stable woman academic might be faced with challenges that require her to slow down for a while, and catch up later. It also became clear that career success for women is not only succeeding in the work they do, but also finding the balance between the work they do and other roles that they occupy, be it in the family or the society.

From the findings, it also became clear that parental values played a substantial role in encouraging women during the early stages of their development. This is in agreement with extant literature, which has consistently found that parental attachment, positive support, and parents' supporting autonomy are significantly related to higher levels of career decision-making self-efficacy (Wolfe & Betz, 2004). Yet again, some participants owed their success to siblings playing a significant role, particularly in the exploration phase, both as encouragers and enablers, especially where the participant was the youngest child at home. Furthermore, it was interesting

to observe that even in first generation graduate families, encouragement from parents with little or no education played an essential role, particularly where it was combined with hard-working parents who were aspiring, and who provided support to their children.

The results of the study demonstrated that throughout all phases of career development, women with strong family support are better able to juggle work and family, since these support systems permit them to have time off from their domestic duties, and additional time to concentrate on their studies and research. In line with Ismail et al. (2005), the most cited forms of family support were spousal support, domestic help, and putting systems and structures in place. Nevertheless, what was also apparent amongst these women academics is that even the lack of family support did not discourage them from attaining academic success. Where there was no external motivation, they had to draw motivation from within. Putting structures and systems in place was helpful throughout the phases of development, whether at home or at work. Systems such as domestic helpers, drivers, diaries and office secretaries were quoted as sources of support. In addition, planning what you want to achieve in a year or a month and breaking it down into weekly and daily activities is critical for the success of women academics. However, some women academics' challenges to success are related to finances, as buying support systems can also be an expense, especially for single women.

The more women academics climbed the ladder to success, the more challenges they encountered. When promotional opportunities for leadership arose, they tended to be overlooked. Organisational support was cited as instrumental to academic success, and included mentoring, leadership support, supervisor support, organisational culture, policies and programmes. Leadership support was cited as the main contributor to the success of women academics, particularly during the establishment and maintenance stages, in line with Barnett and Bradley (2007)'s claim that organisations that give support to women, by introducing workplace policies that are user-friendly, have seen many women being promoted to the upper echelons of the organisation. This upward mobility presupposes a type of leadership that is sensitive to the changing needs of women. Some of the women academics were able to reach the maintenance stage, which includes promotions, much quicker because of leadership support. Lastly,

women academics who can strike a fair balance between leadership roles and academic roles are more likely to succeed in both, rather than those who focus only on one.

Other women academics succeeded through work centrality, thus putting work at the centre of their lives and making major sacrifices and compromises. Work centrality seems to be the universal feature of any successful individual, as it involves hard work, determination, persistence and career focus, without which no individual can succeed in what they are doing. However, work centrality is not the same as career commitment, as it requires a lot more than an average person's commitment to work.

In conclusion, during the exploration phase, family background plays a foundational role in shaping career choices. During the establishment phase, women academics' career development trajectories are linked to the stories of others – specifically husbands and children. Therefore, women's career development trajectories have an impact on their love stories, as witnessed by divorces due to lack of support for women's career aspirations. Furthermore, an important observation was that the behavioural patterns of women regarding family formation are dissimilar to those of average households, especially women who are aspiring for professorship. These women's lives were characterised by divorces, where a decision had to be made between choosing to save the marriage or continuing with studies and leadership in academia, marrying late, not having children, whether single or married, or having late starts to their careers, where women academics decide to start with families. However, with good career planning and the integration of personal and professional goals, aspiring women academics can mitigate the impact of divorce.

The other mitigating variables in terms of the lack of support systems were intrapsychic factors. As the research findings revealed, even where there was an unpromising family background, lack of mentors and role models, or where the organisational culture was not very supportive, passion, determination to succeed, looking out for opportunities, and grit all combined, and were able to sustain the women professors until they succeeded, especially in the establishment phase of their careers. Even with interruptions during their career, these intrapsychic factors became the drivers of these

women's success because of the passion that was established early, coupled with discipline and determination to succeed.

My understanding is that from the start, all these women had a high level of self-efficacy, in that they believed they could achieve academic success, and their level of effort was accordingly informed by their beliefs. Bandura (1977) postulated that these expectations determine whether a certain behaviour or performance will be attempted, the amount of effort that the individual will contribute to the behaviour, and how long the behaviour will be sustained when obstacles are encountered.

7.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented the substantive theory of career development for women academics in South African HEIs. I started off by discussing the relevance of traditional theories of career development to women academics in South African HEIs, followed by an explication of the need for an Afrocentric approach to the study of the career development of women.

CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter integrates the study by providing a summary of all the chapters already presented. In doing so, I provide a critical account of how the theoretical and empirical research objectives, as outlined in chapter one (section 1.5), were achieved in relation to each chapter and overall. Furthermore, this approach to the final chapter establishes the link between the research objectives and the findings, and I continue to discuss the limitations of both the theoretical investigation and empirical results. Finally, I outline the contribution of this research to the field of career psychology and make recommendations for future research and for the career development of women academics in a South African HEI context.

8.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

The objective of this research was to explore, describe and explain the career development trajectories of senior women academics in HEIs in South Africa, with the aim of generating a substantive career development theory that describes the career development experiences of senior women academics in HEIs in South Africa, as outlined in chapter one, section 1.5. The thesis constitutes eight chapters designed and presented to realise the stated aim. Figure 8.1 below depicts the summary of the chapters.

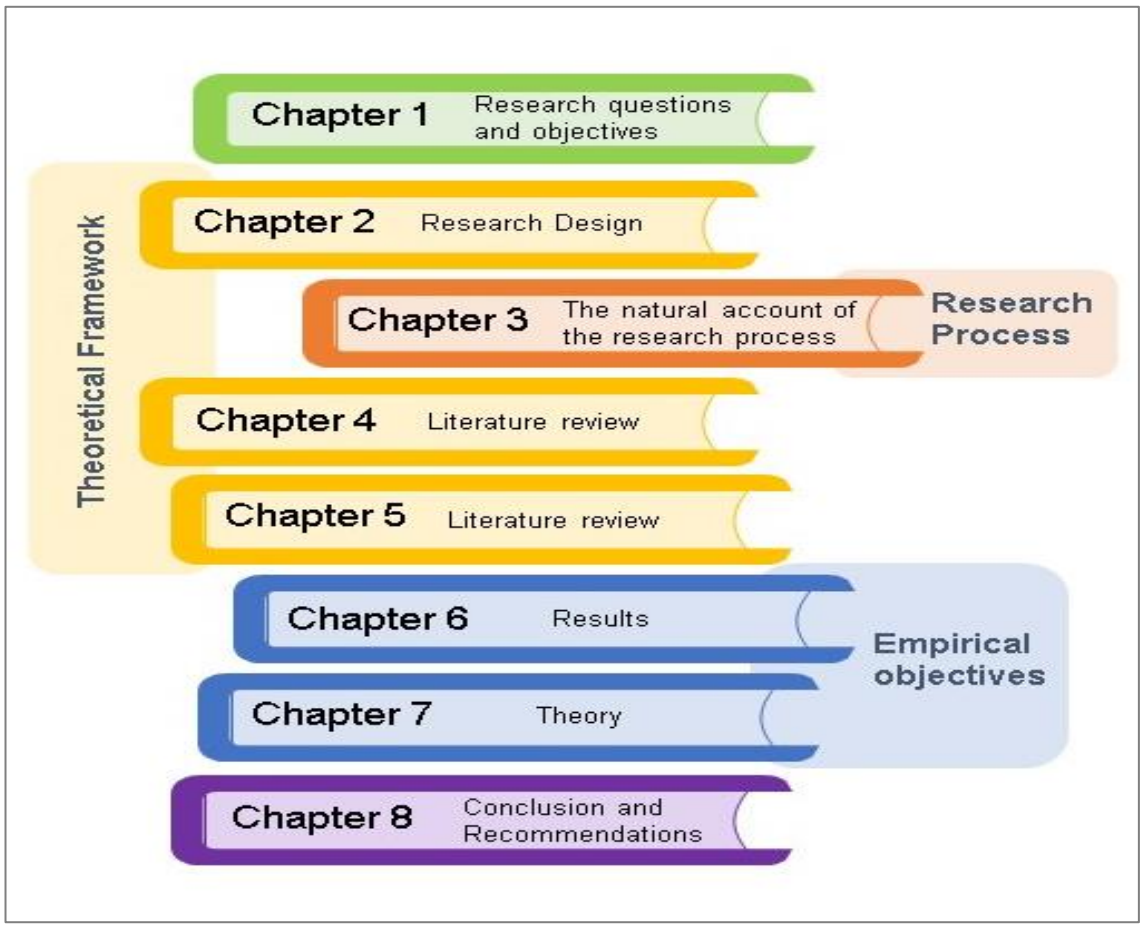

Figure 8.1: Summary of chapters

Chapter one focused on providing insight into the research problem. It sketched the uniqueness of the HEI sector and its demands, and described what success means in academia. In addition, specific challenges facing women academics, particularly in meeting HEI challenges, were outlined, as well as how these challenges have created a knowledge gap, as women remain underrepresented in academia, despite the increase in their participation and success rates in postgraduate studies over the past few decades. Nonetheless, in the same chapter, success stories of women academics were celebrated, and how in the past decade, a conscious effort has been made by HEIs to award outstanding women academics with leadership roles. Besides this, as the researcher, I positioned myself and explained my personal motivation for conducting this research and gave an account of how I have applied reflexivity to ensure that my personal experiences and background do not affect the research quality, and thus the rigour of my findings. Lastly, in this chapter, I discussed the expected contribution of this research to the discipline of IOP, namely to develop a

substantive career development theory from the experiences of the selected senior women academics.

Chapter two looked at the discipline context, study context, my research orientation and philosophy of science, and the research design. In this chapter, I explained the purpose of the research and why qualitative research was deemed an appropriate research design. The research approach, namely a CGT approach, was explained in detail, as well as how it resonated with the research objectives and my assumptions about research.

Chapter three gave a natural account of the research process based on the sampling decisions, data collection and data analysis strategies. I explained how the trustworthiness of the results was quality assured and discussed the ethical considerations and reporting of the research findings.

Chapters four reviewed literature on career development trajectories of women in academia internationally. Barriers to the career development of women and the factors responsible for the success of women were discussed from a theoretical perspective based on previous studies, and a gap in both literature and methodology was identified, as well as how this research sought to bridge this gap.

Chapter five focused on the models and theories of career development, looking specifically at their applicability to women in the South African context, and women academics in particular. In this chapter, a gap was identified between previous research and the proposed research framework for this study, which was presented in chapter seven.

Chapter six presented the findings and discussion. The investigation examined how factors such as family background; family support or lack thereof, presence or absence of organisational support, intrapsychic factors, such as determination to succeed, grit, and self-efficacy, as well as behavioural patterns of women academics, such as early career planning, sacrifices and compromises, and work centrality interact, and their impact on the career progression of women professors. Furthermore, the results revealed different patterns of career development trajectories for different women

academics, namely: linear, interruptions, late starters, transitions and sustained effort. Participants' views were explored using 13 in-depth unstructured interviews with selected women professors and associate professors from different fields of study in different HEIs in South Africa, using purposive, snowball and theoretical sampling. The findings illustrate that inhibiting factors are similar for most women, despite differences in race and cultural background. However, there are remarkable differences between women with support systems and women who do not have support systems. In addition, there are differences between married women with children, and women with no children. Furthermore, there are significant differences amongst women of different racial backgrounds with regard to enabling environments. In addition, this chapter interpreted the findings, integrated the results with theory, and synthesised the literature review and the findings.

Chapter seven presented the theory developed from the findings and described the new theoretical contribution of this study. As the purpose of grounded theory is to develop a theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 32) stated the following: "generating a theory puts a high emphasis on *theory as process*; that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfected product". For this reason, in chapter seven, I presented a detailed description of the career development trajectories and impact factors, and the different phases that women go through in their career development trajectory. This information is designed to contribute to the development of a theory that can be further tested by others.

Chapter eight summarised all the chapters, discussed the limitations and contribution of the study, and provided recommendations for future research. Lastly, I made personal reflections on the findings of this research and how they resonate with my personal career development trajectory, by comparing myself with the other participants' trajectories.

8.3 LINKING RESEARCH FINDINGS TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

As already indicated in chapter one, the purpose of this research was to explore, describe, and explain the career development experiences of senior women

academics in HEIs in South Africa, and to develop a substantive career development theory based on these experiences.

Specifically, this research aimed to do the following:

1. study barriers to women's career advancement, and the strategies to overcome the barriers, as well as to;
2. study women discourses in academia locally and internationally, identify the gap in literature and methodology, and explain how this research sought to bridge the identified gap;
3. examine selected career models and theories of career development, and critique their applicability to South African women, particularly women academics;
4. explore, describe and explain the career trajectories of senior women academics in South African HEIs, through an empirical investigation; and lastly
5. construct a substantive career development theory based on the findings of the empirical investigation.

Objectives one, two and three were achieved through the literature review, whilst objectives three and four were met through the empirical investigation. The gap identified during the literature review was that while the extant literature on the subject of career research is increasing, there remains, however, a paucity of research focusing on career development experiences of women academics within the South African context. Secondly, the existing career development theories were tested on different population samples with different backgrounds, using methodologies that are positivistic in nature. They were thus criticised for being decontextualised when transposed directly to the South African context. This reality implied that there are missing voices in the literature on career development. Expanding the voices that speak was thus seen as crucial for expanding the theoretical knowledge about career development, because of the shortcomings of the western models and frameworks to accurately reflect the lived experiences of women, and South African women in particular. This is what led me to consider contributing to the construction of a contemporary career development theory that is context-specific, which will grant

authentic expression and representation to women in the HE sector within the South African context.

The aim of this research was therefore to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by incorporating the missing voices in the career literature, with specific reference to the higher education sector, as the researcher is more familiar with this sector and how it operates.

8.4 CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

Findings from the current study describe women academics' experiences as being linked to their upbringing, their parents and sibling's orientation to life, their own exposure and life experiences, and lastly, to their husbands and children's life stories. To this end, family background, and the availability or non-availability of support systems, either in the family or organisation, were cited as success or inhibiting factors. In addition to the enablers of and constraints to the success of women academics, as identified and described in this research, intrapsychic factors responsible for academic success, and behavioural patterns of women in academia were thoroughly discussed in terms of their impact on the career success of women academics. More importantly, the research contributed by constructing differential career development trajectories (linear, transitions, interruptions, late starters and sustained effort) and stages or phases of career development for women academics in South African HEIs. These phases include career exploration, career establishment, career maintenance, work-life adjustment and disengagement. As this theory supports social constructionism, these stages are not linear - in most instances, they are cyclical, as women's lives continue to evolve.

The study was conducted within the social constructivism paradigm. An inductive process of CGT was followed to develop a new theory on the career development experiences of senior women academics. Unstructured interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and I kept a reflexive journal of the research process and the emotions experienced by the participants and myself. The participants selected for this study comprised 13 women professors and associate professors from different HEIs in South Africa across various disciplines. The demographic details of the participants were

presented in chapter three, as it is important in answering the research question. Through reflexivity, member checking and retrospective accounts, I provided evidence that these experiences were real, as experienced by the participants, as outlined in chapter three. An inductive coding process was used to develop themes using manual coding, assisted by an independent coder, in order to verify codes and manage data efficiently.

8.5 LIMITATIONS

8.5.1 Limitations of the literature review

To a novice researcher such as myself, engaging with GT was challenging at first. Despite traditional GT perspectives denouncing a literature review before engaging with the data, I had to contend with what is practical and acceptable regarding the literature review. Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978), the founders of GT, recommended conducting a literature review after developing an analysis, to avoid forcing the data into preconceived categories and theories. However, contemporary CGT theorists such as Charmaz (2006, 2014) encouraged a review of literature prior to fieldwork. Charmaz (2014) suggested that a thorough literature review prior to conducting research is valuable for developing theoretical sensitivity, and therefore, on many accounts, I found that Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory resonated with my intentions, based on her views regarding the literature review, philosophical assumptions, and coding procedures. I therefore decided on the CGT. I therefore conducted a literature review prior to and during the empirical stages of the study, which have biased the study in a specific meta-theoretical manner.

Such an approach to theory however also has value. For one, doctoral researchers are unlikely to get supervisors' or ethical committees' approval if they do not demonstrate familiarity with the literature on their topic (Kilbourn, 2006; Piantanida & Garman, 1999). Creswell (2013) also documented that doctoral students may be forced to demonstrate theoretical knowledge of the subject matter under investigation through the review of literature prior to conducting fieldwork, and that their proposals need this for approval by review boards.

Thus, I did a preliminary literature review before going into the field, although following the investigation; I needed to do a further review based on the research findings. I however, believe that the preliminary literature review was not detrimental to the whole research process. Being explicit about the theoretical orientations that directed my thinking provides transparency and rigour to the findings.

8.5.2 Limitations of the empirical investigation

The limitations of this qualitative research lay in the historical fact of the negative bias towards qualitative research findings, when compared to quantitative data (Carr, 1994). For this reason, there was a reflexive process underpinning every stage of this qualitative study, to ensure that researcher biases, presuppositions, and interpretations were clearly evident, which was meant to ensure the rigour of the research. Despite the limitations, this research was also characterised by certain strengths. Firstly, the study was conducted locally, that is, in South Africa, using participants from South African higher educational institutions. The research was also very rich and based on the reality of the women professors who contributed to this study, as the focus was on their lived experiences. Reporting on the findings was quite an involved process. This research has undoubtedly been laborious and exhaustive, as a systematic approach was crucial to its effectiveness. I spent extensive time, not only on the data collection, but also on the analysis and interpretation of the data. I immersed myself as the instrument of data collection and analysis due to the labour intensity of the data production and analysis, and the fact that I co-created meanings of the pieces of data collected, to draw comparisons and create relationships.
Finding the GT approach that resonated with me as a novice researcher was a daunting task, but as I immersed myself in the literature on GT methodology, I learnt that I must allow my philosophical assumptions to guide my actions. Therefore, I selected the CGT approach developed by Charmaz (2006; 2014).

In addition, I was appalled by the difficulty of analysing and presenting large amounts of data, given that this was my first encounter with grounded theory. I struggled to decide which coding techniques to use. It then dawned on me that at the beginning of the PhD journey, I never anticipated walking through this maze and finding myself in a big, dark forest with rocky and bumpy roads. Furthermore, as noted in the literature,

theory development may be the most difficult stage of a GT dissertation (Charmaz, 2006). The GT literature is vague about theory development, and inexperienced researchers might expect that once coding is completed, a theory will organically emerge. This was not the case, at least not in my own experience. I found it challenging to develop and conceptualise a theory from the data.

The rationale for using multiple participants was to determine whether the findings could be replicated across cases. An important step in all these replication procedures was the constant comparison of data pieces across different cases, and the development of a rich, theoretical framework (Yin, 2014). However, the general conclusions drawn from this research, the theoretical proposition, and the theory generated only provide insight into the experiences of women professors within the purposive sample.

Another controversial issue regarding the research itself was related to a black woman researching other racial groups, but this gave me a lot of theoretical insight as I put on my reflexivity lenses, which might not have been available to a within-group researcher. I can therefore confirm that there is no uniform experience amongst academic women, which is consistent with the principle of constructionism that there is no single reality to be discovered, given the heterogeneity of women's experiences. As Alcoff (1991) indicated, not only is location epistemologically salient, but certain privileged locations are conversationally dangerous, with particular reference to privileged persons speaking for or on behalf of less privileged persons. Alcoff (1991) stated that this has helped to increase or reinforce the oppression of the group that is spoken for. My hope is that as a black woman, I will not be criticised for speaking on behalf of other women, especially since adequate evidence have been provided to demonstrate how meaning between myself and the participants were co-constructed and how the findings were grounded in the data.

Therefore, others can still test the findings drawn from this research in future research. Lastly, as this research focused on the experiences of women professors in HEIs in South Africa, the small number of participants in the study impacts the generalisability of the results to other women professors in South Africa and elsewhere. In addition, the differences in their experiences, resulting from by the organisational cultures of the

HEIs for which they worked, are worth noting. The experiences, thoughts, and opinions of the participants may or may not reflect the experiences and opinions of other women professors anywhere else in the world. Further research may therefore be essential to validate the findings of this study.

8.6 IMPLICATIONS AND POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

This section explains the theoretical and methodological contribution of this research, and the implications for practice.

8.6.1 Theoretical contribution

The heterogeneity of academic women's experiences based on their geographical locations, cultural backgrounds, demographic profiles, societal norms, skill levels and other factors responsible for differences in women's behaviour makes it impossible to have a single theory that explains the career development journeys of women academics. There is thus a continuous need to expand voices that speak on the career development of women in academia, something that this research has contributed towards, but to which there is no ending.

This research made an original and creative contribution to knowledge by developing a substantive career development theory that describes the career trajectories of women academics in South Africa, thus expanding extant literature in the field of career psychology. Again, as previously indicated, this research explored and described the career development phenomenon within South African HEIs from the feminist point of view. This is fundamental to feminist research because of the complexity of women's issues. The findings of this research gave explanation to the factors responsible for the career success of women and where there are remarkable differences, an explanation of the differentials in the career development journeys of women academics in South African HEIs was provided.

The substantive theory of career development trajectories of women academics revealed the following:

- Women academics' career trajectories are not all linear. Some are marked by interruptions, transitions, late starts and spiral growth, and in limited cases, steady and sustainable career progression.
- Women academics with stable and sustainable career development trajectories have made work the centre of their lives.
- Support systems have played a major role in creating a conducive environment for the success of women academics.
- Self-efficacy, grit and determination to succeed have served as the mediating variables, even where there were no support systems.
- Role models and networks facilitate academic success in women.
- Family background, mentors and role models, organisational culture, and work-family balance and integration are external factors.
- Career planning, sacrifices and compromises, and work centrality are prevalent behavioural patterns amongst women academics.
- Women academics face unique challenges as they ascend to leadership positions in South African HEIs.

In summary, the study has revealed that even in cases where there was no promising family background, and there was a lack of mentors and role models, factors such as a supportive organisational culture, passion, determination to succeed, looking out for opportunities, and managing work-life balance were able to sustain women professors until they succeeded. This is consistent with Deckers (2010), who postulated that intrinsic motivation does not come from an external source, but is inherent in the activity being performed, regardless of whether it is considered good or pleasurable in and of itself. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is motivation that is considered to be coerced by the environment, and derived from an external source, such as the approval of others. The results revealed that internal and external factors are critical elements in determining success in academia. Furthermore, the results showed an inextricable link between the internal and external factors, such that it became impossible to give credence to one factor over the other. For example, it can be deduced from the responses of the participants that even in cases where there were interruptions during

the course of a career, where passion for the field was established early, and where there was discipline and a high level of efficacy and determination to succeed, women professors have succeeded, despite a lack of support systems in some instances. This points to the interaction of these factors. Lastly, women academics who are able to strike a fair balance between leadership roles and academic roles are more likely to fill leadership positions in academia than those who only focus on their field of study.

8.6.2 Methodological contributions

Methodologically, this research contributed to grounded theory research, feminist research and social constructivist research. As already noted, the feminist critique of social science is that women's lives have been studied from a positivist, patriarchal paradigm, which has no existential connection to the personal (Garko & Florida, 1999). In this research, women academics' stories were told by them explaining their family backgrounds, their organisational cultures, societal norms and other factors that may have affected the outcome of their career success. By studying the heterogeneity of academic women's experiences in their real contexts, this research was able to contribute to social constructivist research. Furthermore, this research contributed epistemologically by using CGT research epistemologies, thus expanding literature on CGT studies. Constructivist grounded theory as a methodology promotes the reflection on wider philosophical orientations deemed more appropriate for including previously excluded voices, as depicted in Figure 7.2 of chapter 7 of this report. Thus, the theory made a methodological contribution to social constructivist career research and CGT in particular, and provided an Afrocentric research approach. In chapter seven, I illustrated in Figure 7.2 how this study operationalised an Afrocentric approach. I refer to my research as contributed to indigenous psychology, because it investigated the real-life context of women in South African HEIs, and focused on providing vivid, dense, and full descriptions of the phenomenon being studied, in this case career development trajectories in line with Berry & Kim (1993) and Chilisa (2012).

8.6.3 Implications for practice

At a practical level, the results of this research and the knowledge generated are expected to provide a platform for the engagement of policy makers within HEIs. Policy

makers should therefore devise ways in which they can build their organisational culture and policies around the newly generated knowledge and understanding, which is a practical contribution of the research in HEIs. Policy makers are expected to be conversant with and sensitive to the challenges faced by women academics in trying to achieve their career goals, as well as what kinds of support academic women need from the organisation.

Organisations, specifically HEIs, should also come up with policies that enable the success of women academics. Families can also benefit from the findings of this research, by knowing which kind of support to offer in terms of their children's career choices.

Lastly, the results will benefit aspiring women who want to pursue an academic career, regardless of their age.

8.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

From these findings, it is clear that there is a need to rethink career theory. Researchers need to deconstruct, construct and reconstruct career development theories. Levinson's (2005) study reported that women lack confidence in their ability to occupy senior positions, which is something that could be explored further through future research. There is thus a need to conduct further research on contextual and other underlying factors that may contribute to the development of the self-efficacy of women academics in particular. Similarly, in line with previous research by Hackett and Betz (1981), the research findings confirm that what threatens women's ascension to academic leadership is the lack of role models, the continued presence of gender stereotypes, and insufficient organisational support. The results revealed that skin colour is still an issue in HEIs, with black women experiencing serious challenges in fitting into patriarchal organisational cultures that are predominantly white and male. Prevalent gender stereotypes and insufficient organisational support are areas that need further investigation, to explore what HEIs are doing to challenge the ethos of racism and sexism. The more women PhD graduates there are, the bigger the pool of talented women eligible for academic leadership, and the question is whether, considering the issues that seem to hamper women's career development, our institutions are ready to give women leadership roles. Furthermore, pushing women into academic leadership, without providing the necessary support, will not disentangle the challenges of HEIs, neither will the adoption of a non-confrontational culture, which subtly encourages the victimisation of those who are willing to challenge the status quo.

Lastly, the impact of work on family and how it affects the career success of women academics in South Africa needs further investigation. Further research is recommended to establish whether intrinsic motivation alone can lead to career success, without input from the external environment.

8.8 PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

In Chapter one (section 1.2.5), I have already outlined how my personal background influenced my worldview, and how my professional experiences played a vital role in the choice of this research topic. My individual familiarities and observations as a woman academic in her midlife led me to do research on the career development trajectories of women academics. Listening to the stories related by these women made me realise that my personal and professional challenges in relation to career advancement were not unique, and that these barriers can be overcome. It also facilitated a process whereby I appreciated my career phase and understood that each woman's academic trajectory is different, as informed by several factors, which I related to, and that I needed to acknowledge that there is nothing wrong about where I am in life. Furthermore, I realised that all I need to do is to align my personal and professional goals, and to keep on pushing ahead, regardless of the barriers, because it is sustained effort that makes one succeed. The findings discussed in this chapter were a reflecting mirror for me in so many ways.

Through studying women academics' experiences, I was motivated to engage in self-reflection on the experiences I have had, both as a woman and an academic, as well as my other identity of being a mother. Some of the women academics in this study were younger, and others older than myself, and all of them faced similar challenges in negotiating their different identities and roles. I realised that although I was an early starter like some of them, my career path was marked by interruptions triggered by child bearing and child rearing, amongst other things, which caused delays in my career progression, similar to P5, the only single mother in the study.

Furthermore, I learned that if I had been better oriented early in my career, such as P3 and P4, I could have done better career planning, and integrated my career more successfully with my personal life, thereby making better career and personal choices for myself in terms of what comes before what. When I decided to pursue my PhD, it was the realisation that there was a gap in my life in terms of where I was and where I wanted to be. I therefore decided that I needed to advance my studies and work on my publication record, so that I could reach the level of becoming an academic, which I had envisaged for myself. On the positive side, I believe that I am on the right track, given the fact that I am doing this PhD research.

As a researcher, as already explained in chapter two section 2.7, I positioned myself by explicitly conveying my background and work experience to the participants, and how this was likely to inform my interpretation of the information obtained from this research through reflexivity. As mentioned by Guba and Lincoln (1985), self-reflection is necessary in a qualitative study to ensure the rigour of findings, interpretations and conclusions. I am therefore confident that all necessary measures were taken to safeguard the rigour of my research findings, as discussed in chapter three.

The discussion below focuses on the similarities and differences that I found between the career development experiences of the participants and myself. I will justify my opinions by presenting a few extracts from the transcripts. I will then talk about my emotional state at the time of data collection, and the new self that was created through collecting these stories, which have definitely influenced my life. Lastly, I will share some of my reflective research journal notes.

8.8.1 Similarities between my career development trajectory and that of the participants

Some of the responses from the participants that I found similar to my own experiences start with my high school days, when I used to be the best student and ended up acting as a tutor in my class. Little did I know that this would have implications for my career choice. Participant 8 shared the same sentiment, saying the following: *"I ended up being a tutor for the class, both in class and in hostels. People would sit around me for geography and history lessons. We used to write monthly tests and teachers would*

publish the results from the highest to the lowest grade. I was always switching between the highest and the second highest". This is the description of how I used to spend my day at the boarding school where I matriculated. I was very good in accounting and business economics. I even believed that I was going to be a chartered accountant. After school, my classmates would flock to my room, or we would go and find a place outside the residence, so that I could teach them accounting and business economics. Boarding school thus served as a revelation, in that my horizons were expanded, and my ambitions were stretched beyond my immediate environment.

Regarding family background, I did not grow up in a family of graduates, at least not before I graduated. I was the first university graduate in my family, similar to P4, P5, P7, P8 and P11. On my father's side, there were of course teachers who graduated from teaching colleges– the best profession at the time - who acted as my family role models. My mother and father had gone to university but had not graduated at the time I got my first degree. Therefore, I was a first-generation graduate. Going down memory lane and reflecting on the past, I now realise that I also survived through encouragement from my parents, especially my mother. Having married at the age of 19, before she realised her career ambitions, she always impressed on me the disadvantages of getting married before making a career for oneself, and I therefore learnt from her experiences. I am a product of a society that valued marriage more than a career, and being the only girl at home, I could have fallen into that trap, if not for the encouragement at home, where my talents were identified, coupled with my boarding school experience, and the pressure there to pursue higher education. There was also a lot of affirmation from teachers and classmates. When my parents' financial resources became insufficient, I took advantage of the study opportunities that were granted to deserving students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and I therefore worked harder than an average student did to fulfil my ambitions, similar to P7 and P8. Fast-forwarding to the present, all my siblings are now graduates, with the minimum of a Master's degree, and they are pursuing their PhD degrees. Participant 4 said, "*Imagine nobody in my family had gone to university. So my parents always encouraged my sister and me to study further."* I now realise that I broke the cycle of poverty at home and, unknown to me at the time, opened a door for my siblings to enter, and the rest is history. Some people in my community likewise attest to the fact that the first time they saw a graduate was with me, so I became a role model, and

they followed. Little did I realise then, however, that there were still many rivers to cross.

I started working at the then historically black universities, where there was not much of a research focus at the time, which affected my research out. This experience is similar to that of P8, who said, *"In those days, historically black universities were not research focused*."

My first job was as a junior lecturer at a university, which was a high-profile job, and still is. I was 21 years of age when I started working. Looking back on that time, if I had received a proper induction into the academic profession, like P3 and P4, I think that I would have been a professor by now. What compounded my academic progress was the lack of role models or people with an interest in mentoring me on this PhD journey. I completed my Master's in 2005, nine years later, and by that time I had already experienced the interruption of having a child. I took long breaks in between qualifications, as there was no pressure for vertical progression academically in my workplace. Since I loved to study, I collected postgraduate diplomas whenever I felt a gap in knowledge, because I was not properly oriented. Eleven year after my first child, I had another child, just when I had made up my mind to pursue my PhD, and the work-life balance became even harder, being a single parent who had to be financially viable to afford support systems, and with my mother's health deteriorating. I could therefore not rely on her to assist with my children. This experience is similar to the one shared by P5, the only single (never married) mother of all the participants interviewed. P5 indicated that she had imagined that by 35, she would have her PhD, but having two children became a greater responsibility than she had anticipated. This shed some light on why P1 decided to not have children early, even though she was married. Likewise, I understand why P3, P4 and P10 decided not to have children before getting married, and if marriage is delayed, then children are delayed. P10, who is black and single, may have been influenced by the British culture, as she spent ten years in the UK, as well as by her religious convictions. I had always wanted a family, and an integrated life, like P9, but there were disappointments along the way. However, I also understand my differences in this regard, in that whilst I have always been a professional, I have also sought balance in my life, rather than only focusing on work centrality, unlike some women who would rather make work their focus to succeed.

Similar to P7's experience, I was promoted to senior lecturer after completing my Master's degree. *"Those days you needed a Master's degree to qualify as a senior lecturer."* Correspondingly, P7 got the Head of Department (HoD) position when the previous HoD retired, which I similarly experienced. I became the HoD in my previous job when the HoD retired. P7 said the following: "*The previous HoD retired and I was put in his position."*

From the stories of P5, P6, P7 and P12, I deduced that balancing priorities will always be a challenge, that one always has to make choices, and that there are sacrifices to be made. As part of the sacrifice, I identify with spending long hours at work, picking up children and letting them do their homework in the office, feeling guilty when I am not at home, and making up for the time I was absent home. As a single mother with little support, I am always consumed by guilt. Furthermore, I have negotiated with my line manager to take one day per week as my study day, as advised by P4, which has contributed a lot to my academic success. It eliminates the guilt I feel when I have to work over weekends, although I do still work some weekends. Like P6, I have also made sacrifices socially, but I do not intend to be single forever.

Participant 10 reported: "*I am from a Christian home, where my parents are not necessarily educated. However, they are hard workers. Then again they always believed in striving for success."*

I identify with P10's upbringing and the values that were instilled early in her life, because it actually resonates with the person that I am. Little did I realise that it affected my career decisions, and I just wish, as it did with P10, that it could have affected my life decisions earlier.

Furthermore, P10 said, "*My family had the most trust in me, believing that whatever goal I set I could achieve, regardless of how big the obstacle is. They also had the confidence in me that I could finish in record time, which I did*." I also grew up with a lot of affirmation at home, and strong beliefs in my abilities. At home, it was standard that we did not repeat grades, and that we passed in record time, which I did. The other thing I learnt at home was that after matric, you go to university, and that was it.

Likewise, P10, coming from a black family, which was similar to mine, got this motivation at home.

Participant 5 said, “You *know I thought I would be a doctor by age 35. However, I got it when I was 44.* I can identify with this, as I had thought that by now, I would have my doctorate, but I am 44 this year, and it is likely that I will have it later than the time I had set for myself.

Again, P5 said, “*But then I became a mother in 2002 and that boy is big now. Therefore, I think I got tired, and I felt guilty for leaving my son all by himself. Moreover, not being married, I did not want to not be a good mother. My other reason is that it took me time to identify my PhD topic.”*

I can also identify with how being a mother can slow one down and being an unmarried mother with very few support systems at home, there is always the fear of not being a good mother. Similar to P5, it took me time to decide on my PhD topic. I got my breakthrough from a Pre-PhD programme (an NRF initiative) that came to the Eastern Cape, and the sessions were held at Fort Hare University. I enrolled for this programme, which was the first of its kind and unheard of in the Eastern Cape. The spaces were limited, and it was a national drive, so there were other provinces represented in the group. Erik Hofstee (the facilitator) and the mentors who were part of this programme assisted me to proceed. It opened our eyes to the reality that in South Africa, there are many people wanting to do a PhD, but they are stuck at the proposal writing stage, and universities require a research proposal to accept you into their PhD programmes. Unisa subsequently accepted my proposal, and I got space in the Department of IOP at Unisa, after knocking on the doors of higher learning for a long time.

8.8.2 Differences between researcher and participants

I cannot identify with P7, who said the following: "*My husband took on a very active role in the rearing of our son, and a lot of domestic responsibility."* I cannot relate to this experience. I have always been a single mother, never married, and have never enjoyed the sharing of responsibilities with the father of my children, something that I would have really appreciated.

8.8.3 Lessons drawn from the women academics' experiences

I have observed stark differences amongst races in terms of balancing life and career. I learned that white and Indian women are better at career planning and work-family integration than black women are. I also learned that black women have overcome so much adversity compared to white women, who have worked in supportive work environments. This teaches me the importance of providing mentoring and coaching to the next generation. Listening to the advice from a previous DVC of two large universities on how to juggle family and work, I feel that I am on the right track in terms of focusing on building my academic career, a decision that led to me leaving my previous job and pursuing my PhD. I realised that leadership involves being more mature than most, and therefore requires a more prepared person. In addition, I needed to be more convincing to my peers, not only where I worked, but everywhere, so that I did not suffer from an inferiority complex when taking on a challenge. As a mother, I have children to raise, which is my other priority that needs attention. I am on my way to getting my PhD and working on my research reputation, and then when my children are older, I may consider leadership positions, as I am interested in being a leader and researcher, and this study gave me an idea of how to go about it. This is what P2 said:

> *Now, younger females have often come to me for advice – those who have ambition on how they should juggle all the challenges and so on. My advice has always been not to be too greedy too early in your career, in other words, if you are relatively young and you have small children, focus on your academic career. Get your doctorate, and get a good research reputation. Because that is indispensable. At HEIs, you must convince the institution/ academic*

community that you are a good academic before they accept you as a leader. So focus on that. Then, when your children get a bit older, maybe go and talk to the programme coordinator and the Head of Department, and if you feel you like that, because not everybody wants to do that, some people would like just to be an academic. If you feel you like the leadership role, then you can start focusing more on that and doing some development work, in terms of leadership development. However, it is much easier for a female to do that if you are a bit older. That is what I found; I would not have been able to be a DVC at a relatively large university if my children were small. I managed because they were older. Well ya, when I started working, really looking at my career life, I had had all my children and I had a Master's. I could then focus on my career. Therefore, I think females should be cognisant of where they are in terms of their particular life stages, and they should acknowledge that some life stages are going to take more from them in terms of family. In addition, in other life stages, they will spend more time in the office or on their careers, and they should try balancing that.

I gave this advice careful thought and I think that it is something that I could apply in my own life. As part of career planning, I believe that as women, we should be able to decide when we want to start a family. For me, these were never well thought through decisions, and I now realise how these decisions affected my career progress. However, P2 shows that these challenges are not permanent. I find security in the fact that, despite all the responsibilities that I have had, I have still set aside time for my studies, and that I love my children, and they are equally making progress, which means that they will not be dependent on me forever.

When P4 relayed that, "I *am close to 50. I met my husband two years ago and neither of us have been married before, so we will not have children, it is beyond me now. However, that is fine. It's a different stage."* This made me realise that even though I am not yet close to fifty, since I am now in my early forties, and still not married, the possibility of marriage does exist. Therefore, choosing an academic career could mean getting married later in life. This was the confirmation I needed, as I still want to get married, and marriage is not only meant for having children. As P4 said, she did not get married in order to have children, since she is already past that stage.

As already mentioned, I got a senior lecturer position after completing my Master's degree. After the merger, there were pressures from the universities for senior staff members to up their game by obtaining their PhDs. This exacerbated the pressure I was already under to pursue my dream of having a PhD, and looking back, I think that this was the pressure I needed. Thanks to the merger. Similar experience to what P6 reported: *"But there was some pressure that senior staff needed to up their game".*
Further to this, P6 relayed: *"A kind of primary significant criteria of performance is curriculum development and undergraduate teaching, you get ticked off for every postgraduate student, and for performance and promotion criteria you get bonus points, but there is still a political gripe about considering curriculum development and teaching at undergraduate level."*

At the university where I was lecturing, I was doing mainly teaching up to B Tech level, which was the highest offering at the campus where I was working. Moreover, in terms of the promotions policy developed after the merger process, it became clear that one needed more points to be considered for promotion, which was another source of pressure.

Participant 11 reported:

> *I am caught between being a good leader and being a good researcher. I love both of them. For me, I will continue being a leader and researcher*, *for me my research career never died when I took on a leadership role, because I still followed the same pattern − manager until 4 pm and after 4 a researcher.*

This is my aspiration, namely, to become both a leader and researcher. I do not want to have to choose between leadership and academia, and it is about finding the balance between these two roles. Therefore, I got practical advice from this professor that you should structure your day so that you do your normal duties every day, and still make time for your research. It is advice that I have applied every day, and I intend to do it as long as I live.

On the other hand, P10 reported: "*I didn't have a mentor, I was just very determined to achieve what I wanted".*

In my professional trajectory, I have also lacked mentors, but it was my determination to succeed that carried me through. I always had this thing in me, that it is not enough, you can do better than this, and you have what it takes. I had such a belief in my abilities − even when I could see that I lacked aptitude, I would push until I got it right. Furthermore P10 narrated: "*There were plenty of opportunities in the institution which I had to apply for and compete to get them, even volunteer when I needed to, in order to get the opportunity".*

My professional journey has likewise been characterised by competing for opportunities and doing what must be done to earn those opportunities, even when it meant applying, being rejected, and applying again. By the way, this is what I am still doing, as I am still on this journey of building my career.

Participant 10 reported: *"I am not married. I do not know why, most people at my level are single. But it is not because I want to be single; I have just not met someone."* Although P10 is younger than I am, she acknowledges that people on her level are single, sometimes not out of choice, but because they have not yet met someone. I am in this situation too, but from P4's life story, I have learnt that it is never too late to find love, as she got married when she was almost 50.

Regarding what accounts for success, this is what P7 said: "*I attribute my success to the fact that I have always been one step ahead, so that when opportunities come, I compete effectively. Most women are occupying lower echelons in academia because of lack of preparedness."*

This has taught me that success is a decision, that one has to be serious about being successful from the beginning, and that lack of preparedness will cause women not to succeed in academia.

8.8.4 My emotional state at the time of doing this research

My emotional state at the time of data collection was that of being apprehensive and anxious about getting results. Nevertheless, I learnt that I was on the journey to self-discovery and affirmation by other women who have travelled this path, and women who can identify with every challenge that I, as a woman, am going through, but who already have the recipe for success. Yin (2010, p.264) distinguished between a declarative self and a reflective self. The declarative self wants to share what the researcher has learned and what has become known to the world. The declarative self has been discussed in this research report, and it is what will be known to the whole world.

The reflective self, on the other hand, needed me to admit how I learnt what I know, together with potential questions about my methods of learning and knowing, which I have discussed in chapters two and three. Good qualitative research expresses both selves. The new self that was created by this research is what I have discussed in detail in this section. After this research, I feel motivated to focus on my career ambitions, and to make the right choices for myself regarding relationships, marriage and children. This study also empowered me to understand the level of challenges that women in academic leadership are facing, especially women of my colour, and the various strategies that they adopt to cope with pressure, including travelling overseas for a break, which I find more exciting and exhilarating than frustrating. I believe that being empowered beforehand acts as a reminder when challenges come, and it is therefore appreciated knowledge.

As reflexivity formed an integral part of this qualitative research, I openly acknowledged my biases throughout the research process, and speculated as to how they were likely to affect my findings. I kept a reflective research journal to record my own biases, assumptions and values. The journal contained events of the day, including challenges with meeting participants, changes in times, noise and interruptions in the offices during interviews, the emotional state of the participant throughout the interview, and the length of each interview. The notes were combined with the primary data for referencing, together with the transcribed interviews, and were considered during interpretation. Some of the emotions expressed by participants ranged from crying

when talking about their divorces and children who suffered, to being emotional when talking about not having children, and being angry when relating stories about antagonistic organisational climates. There were also tears of joy when they talked about people who have contributed significantly to their career development, such as the male deans referred to, the professor who offered to supervise their work, getting time off to study, supportive husbands, international exposure, accepted journal articles, writing books, and supervising students. Therefore, based on their reactions, I learnt that I was dealing with women, and very normal human beings, who feel pain as much as I do, and who get excited as much as I do. One thing that excited most women was finding love again after a divorce, which confirms that women's life stories are tied to their love stories.

In the section above, I have tried to highlight what I learned about myself through this research.

8.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a concise summary of all the chapters already discussed. The objectives were connected with the research findings, and the limitations of the research were discussed, as well as its contribution. Lastly, recommendations for future research were presented, after which I shared my personal reflections on this research. I have now concluded this study, with the hopeful belief that what I have constructed here contributes to the discipline of IOP and adds to the knowledge domain studying women academia and their career success.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNISA university of south africa

CEMS/IOP RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

13 May 2015

Ref #: 2015_CEMS/IOP_029
Name: Bongiwe Hobololo
Student #: 54232155
Staff #: N/A

Dear Bongiwe Hobololo

Decision: Ethics Approval

Address: 205 Claystone Place,
Stone Ridge Country Estate, Centurion
Pretoria

Tel: 084 552 1056 / 084 400 1863
012 429 4997 (w)

E-mail: hobolb@unisa.ac.za / bhobololo@gmail.com

Supervisor: Prof Antoni Barnard **Co-supervisor:** Dr Sonja Grobler

Proposal: Career development of senior women academics within the context of EEA 55 of 1998 as amended (2014)

Qualification: **Postgraduate degree**/Non-degree output/Commissioned research

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the CEMS/IOP Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the committee on 13 May 2015.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

1) *The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
2) *Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the CEMS/IOP Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*

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APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

UNISA

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Doctoral research

Researcher: Ms Bongiwe Hobololo (0845521056)

Supervisors: Prof Barnard and Dr Grobler

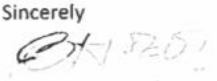
Dear Participant,

I, Bongiwe Hobololo, am a Doctoral student at the University of South Africa. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled:
The career development experiences of senior women academics in Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa (SA).

The aim of this study is to: Generate a career development theory that explains the career trajectories of successful senior women academics in HEIs in SA. Through your participation, I hope to gain deeper insights into the career journey of a woman academic at different stages of their career journey up the level where you are now, and identify the inhibiting and enabling factors.

The outcome of this research is intended to contribute a theory a career development theory to the existing body of knowledge in the field of Industrial Psychology and to Career Psychology (sub-discipline).
Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time with no negative consequences. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this study. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the University of South Africa. If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, please contact me at any time on the number listed above.
It should take approximately **1** hour for the initial interview. I might be required to have follow-up interviews. I trust that you are willing to participate in this study.

Sincerely



Bongiwe Hobololo
Researcher

This page is to be retained by participant

APPENDIX C: VERBATIM EXTRACTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES PER THEME

THEME: ***Family support***
SUB-THEME : Spousal support or lack thereof
SUB-THEME : First generation graduates
SUB-THEME: Parents and siblings' support
SUB-THEME : Support from children
P1" I am married with no kids" … "I grew up in a family of activists, so I understand unfairness."
P2 "My first husband struggled with my career success. I do not think it was easy for him. I was 20 years old when we got married; we were both very young. At that stage one would think that you will have a career at a young age, and then later be a stay-at-home mom"...
P3 "… I have not been married and I do not have children. So I think in that respect, there's a component of the challenge in terms of academic women who are mothers, which I did not have."
P4 "… imagine nobody in my family had gone to university. So my parents always encouraged my sister and I to study further"…
P5" I am still single, a mother of two". My mother was a business woman selling goods on the streets, and providing transport to and from the village to town"
P6 "My father was a lawyer… He encouraged us to further our studies"
P7 "Whilst doing my B Ed, I became pregnant with my son. My husband was a big support system. He encouraged me to further my studies…" *P7 "My husband took on a very active role in the rearing of our son, and a lot of domestic responsibility"* *P7 "When I decided to take sabbatical leave to go to Saudi Arabia, I was going through a separation with my ex-husband. ...My son had passed matric, he could drive. I then put in place structures and left for Saudi Arabia. Coming from a diverse family culture, being married to an Indian, and being colored, having lived with blacks and whites, it was easy for me to fit into the Arabian tradition and culture…"*
P8 "My mother had standard 6, the then highest level of education, and that qualified her to teach in local schools on the farms. That was before she got married. My father stopped at standard five. My mother was a female teacher for three years in junior secondary and my father could read and write at least. So I can safely say my parents' education was advanced for the times"..
P9 "I have a very supportive husband, he's very hands-on in domestic responsibilities"…

P10 "I am the last born at home, my brothers played a role in guiding my career. I was taught that I will finish school, go to university and find a job..." *P10 "My parents taught me that determination is the key to success, much as my parents are not well learned, they are hard-working people"*
P11 "By the time I graduated, I had already met my first husband, whom I met when I was in my third year, and my son was born in his 5th year. When I graduated my family was there." *P11 "When I left for Australia, my marriage was already on the rocks, and every time I phoned my kids were crying on the phone, I realized my kids were falling apart, I took them. My income was not enough, so I waited until my bonus to pay for the children's stay. I had to do extra work. "*
P12 "I negotiated with my kids early in my career, that these are my goals, here is the cost. I am multi-skilled, I pick up my kids, come to the office, I do my work, they do their homework, we go home. In SA, I think it is still difficult for SA men to handle a hard-working woman like myself, especially within our culture. I let the kids cook, as they are now grown up. My husband complains about this. I think that society and the church have played a role in the shaping of these attitudes"…
P13 "In my family I was the last born, my father had 8 wives, as an old chief, they didn't even count the number of kids. My mother was his last wife. Therefore, we grew up as princesses and brother princes. I had educated siblings, my brothers were engineers, pilots, holding senior positions and this was at the beginning of the 1960s. I grew up with policy-making being discussed at home. My brother was a chief whip in the Parliament in non-South African country. He later became the Minister of various things. Others were mathematicians, teachers, etc. When they came home, they talked about the strategic future of our country. So I grew up in this environment, with both a mother and father who were leaders in society and the wider family- my brothers were well educated. This is where I learned to grasp the political situation in a non-South African country and Africa".

THEME: Work centrality
P1 " I love my work" … " I am married with no kids"
P3 "…So, in a certain sense, I would be the first one to say it may have been easier for me to devote my attention fully to my work than balance it with family life and children, and everything else that goes with children. I think that is a factor and there are women who do it successfully." *P3…" not getting married and not having kids …it was a deliberate choice. Because I think if I have to give a reason, it is not even, what I would call a reason. It just happened that I was very happy in my work and in my studies right from the outset. If I say 'happy' I mean I was very fulfilled and satisfied within the field of linguistics that I had been researching and I found that interesting and enjoyable, and together with that, lecturers and supervisors and people in the department who I enjoyed working with…"*
P4 …" for me it was studies, until the post doc fellowship, so as a student, there were no family commitments, and my work was my life. I do not have children and I only got married last year. So yeah, my life was my work. "
P6 "… things are in direct proportion to what you sacrifice to achieve them; it might not look like I have made a lot of sacrifices for me to get to where I am. I'm 61 nearly 62, I'm single, so I don't have a husband or children, maybe that's part of that sacrifice, so on the other hand, I've got different rewards and not necessarily material rewards, so it's been a very enriching and fulfilling career."
P10 "… I am not married. I do not know why, most people at my level are single. Some are divorced or on their second marriage. But it is not because I want to be single; I have just not met someone". *P10 "Remember I finished my PhD when I was 32 years old and my degree when I was 19. When I started to do my pre-masters, it was 2007. Therefore, I took a big gap. In the UK, people who did PhDs were very young, I was the oldest there doing a PhD, and in South Africa, I am the youngest. Here we do our PhDs at a later stage, but what I observed in the UK, they research non-stop, whereas here we take breaks."*

THEME: Self-efficacy
SUB-THEME : Determination to succeed
SUB-THEME : Overcoming challenges to success
SUB-THEME : Passion for the field and research
P1 "… financially it was difficult, the University was paying me peanuts but it was fine. I was doing my PhD."
P2 …" but even whilst I was interrupted, I kept on researching so by the time I achieved my Master's Degree, I got a position at Vista University. "I realized I could no longer be a stay at home mum, I needed the stimulation of a career." *P2…" My Executive Dean said, if I want a promotion, I have to do my Doctorate, so then I said let me do that. It was hard because I was working and I had four children and a big family, but I got my PhD and very shortly afterwards, I was given an opportunity to become a Higher Education Researcher at the University of the Free State."* *P2 "I said I don't know anything about the topic that I have to speak about and he said no-no, you'll be fine". So I did it, and that was his way of really exposing me to a variety of contexts…"*
P3 "I mean I was very fulfilled and satisfied with the field of linguistics… I found the work interesting and enjoyable and together with that, I enjoyed working with the lecturers and supervisors and people in the department."
P3 "I think that there are different levels. The one level it is certainly the interest in your field and the love for your field, the fascination and the interest in the academic field that you are studying. I always show lots and lots of enjoyment and interest in the field that I am studying, to such an extent that I enjoy doing it, it doesn't feel like work to me as such. I think that is a major contributor, I mean with the high level of interest, fascination and intrigue with one's subject field. Also, certainly, a bigger sense of purpose that what you are doing means something for people outside of the university and for our country and the community. I have a very strong sense of that, over all the years that I have been in this department, there is some community service that I do through my work". *P3 "… I enjoyed being in leadership a lot and I enjoyed mentoring other younger staff and putting them on the road to academic progress and success, and that has always been a very important consideration to me. For the simple reason that, I think that is part of the job of every senior to nurture as I have had the opportunity to do so. I do not feel it is an obligation; it is just something that I want to do. I enjoy doing it and in the process, I learn a lot. However, it also means that one has to look at different subject fields and not necessarily, things that you are doing yourself, but you can see what staff members get interested in, and they would like to pursue those fields. I think that mentoring and guidance is an inherent part of the responsibility of any senior staff member in the department ."*

P4 "I did my undergraduate studies at Rhodes. We visited Cape Town and I went to UCT. There I learned of a Master's programme in Maths and Computer Science, but I did not want to be a computer science programmer, … I came to UCT to do my Masters and I was still intending to do teaching, but during my masters studies I really enjoyed the research, because before then I was not exposed to research. So the bursary paid and I continued to do my PhD in Mathematics at UCT, and then towards the end of my PhD, I was invited to a conference in Germany. Then I spent some time in England and France working with some researchers. From then, I knew I was going to become an academic and through those visits, I was able to secure a post- doctoral position at Oxford University, straight after completing my PhD - I went to Oxford for two years. In addition, while I was in Oxford, a position became available at UCT- a vacancy as a lecturer.
P5 "…it took me time to discover my PhD topic. Then in 2006, I started thinking about the topic, so I registered in 2007. I then got a NRF bursary at UJ, but dropped out in 2008. I continued to register at UP in 2009."
P6 "if you are single and you are supporting yourself, it's not an easy space to be financially secure; I mean I would like to do nothing but theater. I started working full time in theater, so I had a very good full time job, I was headhunted, and I was approached by two universities... At this time, I already had my Masters from overseas."
P7 "At the time I started the PhD, my son was four years old, and had already started with pre-primary school. *"P7" Those days there were no emails, we used floppy disks, I was using word perfect 5 for word processing, in the library, and there were no online journals. I had to come to the Unisa branch in East London to borrow books. I used the post office to send my stuff to my supervisor. It is determination to succeed that made me complete my masters."*
P8 "I experienced a lot of poverty during my varsity days; I would take leftover pieces of soap thrown away by others. During my 2nd year, I got a bursary" *P8 …"I became a senior lecturer married with two kids. I presented conference papers and published. I didn't register for my PhD immediately."* *P8 "Married people those days were employed on contract. I was therefore forced to take evening work. I would travel from Alice to Zwelitsha. I had 400 students; undergraduates and postgraduates. Linguistics is a rare skill and therefore there were not many people that have specialized in it. During this time, I started working on my PhD proposal. A supervisor at Rhodes rejected it, saying that it was Masters standard. Those days historically black universities were not research focused."*

P8 "I wrote papers critiquing existing theories in literature, I threatened existing theories, and as a result my papers were not published. There was a lack of mentoring and in those days, universities did not emphasize research. I then became a language expert." *P8 "A languages department institutional audit was done, which led to retrenchments in 2005. I was staying in the university residences, and in 2006, I had to move out and left the University. Doors of opportunity closed. At this point, I decided to pursue my PhD dream; I started applying to universities internationally. I wanted to prove to others and to myself that I was not given the professorship free. University of Florida offered me teaching assistantship too, to teach African languages- (bilingual education) in the College of Education. I accepted the offer, and enrolled for my PhD.*
P9 "When I joined Samcor, I had a social work degree, which sort of doesn't help me to understand the business aspect. Because I was more of a therapist, I decided to pursue something that will help me understand the business aspect in terms of human relations, labour law, etc., because I was working daily with those legislations, hence I decided to do industrial psychology, so I did my NDP and then did my Honors. In addition, it was during that time when I was doing my Honors that I realized that it was interesting, so I decided to explore it further. I liked it because it makes sure that employees add value to companies. I did my Honors in a year, it was not easy because Honors requires that you do it in 2 years, so I approached the CoD and he looked at my academic record. He allowed me to do it in 1 year. We had a long chat, he also encouraged to go further after Honours, and do Masters and so forth, and so I got inspired. I managed to do my Honors within a year. Then there was restructuring in the company I was working for, so our jobs were at risk. Then I decided that I need an environment where I do not have to worry about what the future might hold. I did my Masters and I asked if there is not a suitable post available within the Department. There were no posts at that time, but someone approached me to be their Assistant Tutor for second year module students."
P10 "I knew I wanted to be a professor. I did not have a time scale. And another thing, I also learned that I loved research"
P11" My goal has always been to teach Maths to children of African descent, because of the low mathematics output. My Masters research focused particularly on this. When I was at NMMU I worked with researchers from Canada and US, and this developed my research interest. We co-wrote three papers on culture and its influence, focusing on townships and urban areas. At that time at NMMU, there were still PhDs offered by M graduates, and I decided I would never do my PhD at NMMU. I then applied for a Fulbright Scholarship in 2006 to do a PhD".

P11" At my level, I do not think I have time to rest. The students are more demanding, and as a professor, your outputs must lead."
P12 "Although I wasn't qualified, my English was very good, I managed to get a job at the Transkei Development Corporation (TDC) as the secretary. In that process, whilst I was there, I tried to get my certificates I obtained in Zimbabwe to apply for conditional exemption, and gave these to my brother in law, an inspector then, to fast track the process of getting university admission. The reason why I wanted to get to the university was- I left TDC, got a job a Lovedale Press, and got that influence of a university. I wanted my child to have a better life, and I could see I am not dying anyway. Therefore, I gave my papers to my brother in law, who lost all the papers. When my child was 9 months old, I decided I am going to school, so I stayed with my sister in Mqanduli. I did my matric at Holomisa High in Mqanduli. I studied full time at the age of 26 years doing matric, I paid my helper for looking after my son. I resigned from my previous job; I got some money from my pension. I was forced to do Afrikaans for the first time, Maths, Biology, Xhosa, English and Needlework". *P12 "I finished Masters in 1998 over a year, I was more resilient through thick and thin. In 1999, I started my PhD proposal, which was an advantage with me coming to Australia at my own expense. I was given two years by the Technikon to finish my studies. The Technikon did not pay the fees and therefore I could not graduate, in 1999, I came back for my father's burial and my marriage had completely broken down, there was no intimate relationship with my husband. After burying my father, I went back to Australia to finish my studies, and for my kids, whom I had left behind. So my proposal was accepted in 2000, and I came back to SA as the two-year sabbatical was finished. "* *P12 "When I came back professional jealousy was very rife in my Dept. and the then DVC and VC called me in to tell me about challenges in my department and that he needed my support in heading the department. So the position was advertised for the HoD. The then HoD was ousted by students and the dept. was almost closed and the DVC said we can't close a dept. when there are students and staff busy developing themselves".*
P13 "I finished my Masters in Sweden and enrolled for my PhD. By this time, I was married with 3 kids..." *P13 "I have just turned 60 this year. I got married at the age of 19, had 3 kids and got divorced then remarried…".*

THEME : Organisational support
SUB-THEME : The presence or absence of organizational support
P1 "It's very difficult as a Black woman and that's the reality at universities, they keep you down for as long as possible, so I was there for a number of years and I was publishing more than anyone else and lecturing Masters students and supervising Doctorate students…There were very few Black people that were appointed there… black people who were appointed were in lower positions, black people appointed to higher positions were foreign. So there was a lot of transformation that still had to take place…" *P1 "It's been difficult but you know one had to be courageous, being alone with no support structure, it can be difficult and it's a race issue, there are a lot of complexities in our culture, one has to understand that despite being an activist, the cultural issue as well, you should understand that I could not tolerate that".* *P3 "Many people don't like me and I'm not here to be liked. You know I will do what I have to do to the best of my ability as a Director and give people the support they need. But we have a way to go in terms of academic transformation in this country. But I've never seen it worse in this country than it is here."*
P2 "I worked under a male Dean, who was very supportive and every year when he did my performance appraisals, he would say to me, you did very well this year, but I cannot promote you because you haven't achieved your Doctorate. So if you want promotion in your career you will have to do a Doctorate, so then I said let me do it. It was hard because I was working, and I had four children and a big family, but I got my PhD, and very shortly afterwards I was given an opportunity to become a Higher Education Researcher at the University of the Free State." *P2 "I remember I had only been there for a period of two months when he said "Listen, I'm signed up to address an international conference in four months' time, but I'm going to have a big operation and you will have to go in my place, I said I don't know anything about the topic that I have to speak about and he said no-no, you'll be fine". Therefore, I did it, and that was his way of really exposing me to a variety of contexts. So, I then became the deputy director of the unit. Then there was a big restructuring. In the end, I became a director for the Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development at the University of the Free State. That was really my first management position…"* *P2 "Then the Vice Rector of the institution approached me and asked me to become his academic advisor, so in addition to my job as a Director, I also got more involved in advising the top management of the institution .Then there was a change in the board, and the Vice Chancellor*

retired and the deputy Vice Chancellor became the Vice Chancellor, and he then appointed me as the acting Deputy Vice Chancellor, previously his post, and I acted for about 9 months and I really gained and learned a lot. Therefore, when the position was advertised, various people approached me to apply and I got the position. I then worked with the VC and for me that was one of the highlights of my career, because he was male but he was very open to diversity".
P3 "…I always felt like I got enough individual attention in terms of the field of study, but also because I was appointed at young age… "So at both these universities I worked in a very enjoyable environment and atmosphere that is conducive to research" … "I never had the feeling of somebody telling me what to do or you should do this and this. I always, in as much as one is working on a project or within an approach, felt that I had freedom to expand, to look at other theoretical approaches…" *P3" That was the overriding sort of experience that I had. I have worked in a small department, not in an overwhelming big department, but I had good mentoring and I could develop. I was actually a full-time student until I completed my master's degree."*
P4" When I was at UCT I used to be part of a group that brought international guests to South Africa, so we used to have many international guests. …that is how networking was established. Therefore, it was through my supervisor and the research group that I was in. Every second year we would have a workshop with our researchers and other researchers that would come in my area, so that is how the networking was established. It was through my supervisor and the research group that I was in. *P4 "In my first two years of being a lecturer I was writing a book with my supervisor, which arose from my PhD."* *P4" There are males more senior than me who have really supported me and I have been lucky in that regard".*
P5 "But for me, I don't think there is any obstacle organizationally, because I feel like I have control of what I can do… If I want the paper published, they will pay the fee, if I need statistics, the budget for it is here. So what more do I need? I just need time to write, and I must create time"…
P6 "No matter how intensive your curriculum development at undergraduate level is, it took time for universities to acknowledge creative work as research output. I have got a problem with that, because there is a need for the transformation of pedagogy at undergraduate level. Cutting edge is still- postgraduate. In academia, for promotion, you have to tick the boxes, but there are known designers in the country and I have contributed a lot toin their stage design."

P6 "At that time, I didn't have too many research outputs in my research profile, but it was more on the creative side. Prof XYZ offered to supervise me. The offer clicked, as he is a highly respected scholar and an exciting supervisor. The PhD affected my professional identity".
P7 "Technikons subsidized my studies. There were financial incentives at institutional level and the internal drive. I then enrolled to do a Masters in Education". *P7 "After the university was remodeled, I was appointed as the Director of the School, and after that I was appointed a Deputy Executive Dean. After this, I hit a ceiling, when the Dean was recruited outside. I was a woman and colored, and did not fit the university profile of the suitable candidate. The then organizational culture did not support women's equity. The culture was male-dominated. They appointed someone with a recent PhD, and as the Deputy Executive Dean, I had to do all the work for him. My experience fitted the profile of the candidate required, but the organizational culture did not support the emancipation of women. I then decided to take sabbatical leave and went to Saudi Arabia…".*
P8 "There was a lack of mentoring and in those days, universities didn't emphasize research".
P8" At some stage, I assisted in teaching Afrikaans. I thought I would immediately enroll for honors, but due to work pressure, I was unable to. I enjoyed teaching. Whilst I was doing teaching, I got a letter from a senior lecturer at the Fort Hare University about a vacant junior lecturer position, with application forms attached. Apparently, the position was advertised in the newspaper, but at that time, I had no exposure to or little knowledge about job adverts in newspapers. This is the lecturer who inspired me to be the Xhosa specialist, although to me at that time, the idea of a specialist was limited to high school teaching, not knowing there are other avenues. I was called for an interview, and I was appointed on condition that I register for honors part time. I did not know that as a staff member there was a study subsidy. I did my honors in 1 year, and I became a lecturer. I then got a sponsorship from the British Council to study for a Masters in England. The department identified me and gave me forms to apply."
P9 "What I like about having joined this Department is that it was a blessing, because I had a lot of mature seniors who were willing to mentor me and encourage me, so in that I was able to have a good relationship with my supervisor. Moreover, he was able to expose me to consulting, gave me the necessary skills, and we started consulting together. So then time went on, and I decided to do my Doctorate".
P10" No, I didn't have a mentor, I was just very determined to achieve what I wanted to, even in the UK; I never had anyone who I adored enough to get mentorship from" ….

P10 "It's a culture shock, the people who don't want to be challenged ,the system working slowly, the support system that you expect to work, the policies that were made by people- but people don't abide by them, policies that limit innovation".
P11 "In 2005, the merger was implemented. Once again, there were workplace challenges- there was a restructuring of faculties and departments. I became a dean without portfolio". *P11 "The VC, Prof XYX was very supportive and said the university will pay for my M studies in Australia".*
P12 "My writing skills were never acknowledged in SA, but whilst in the US, I produced a book, in a country where African Americans are not getting any respect, but I got the respect of my supervisor. My supervisor had so much confidence in me that she didn't help me much, and that taught me to work independently, as she would say that she believes I can make it."
P12 "In 2014, I was approached by the university to head the Institute of Maths and Science, and they offered me an Associate Professorship. The first year at the university was a bit difficult for me. I still loved my research and the nature of the institution still allowed me to do this, but I was used to the American culture, where a manager manages until 4 pm, and then after 4, the researcher job starts. That is why for me, my research career never died when I took on a leadership role, because I still followed the same pattern; manager until 4 pm and after 4 researcher."
P13 "After finishing my PhD, I married a man from Holland, then we came to Africa. We first lived in Zimbabwe before coming to SA in 1996. I came to SA to join the Centre for Education Policy Development in Johannesburg. It was an ANC-based centre, and. I was recruited as the Deputy Director. I was called 2 years after the 1994 elections. The post was created for me. I went to the ANC policy meeting and met the crux of the party. CPD was responsible for convening policies on transformation; it was the Mandela initiative before 1994."

THEME: Career planning
SUB-THEME : How having a career plan has assisted women academics to meet their desired goals in spite of the challenges
SUB-THEME : Making decisions such as delaying marriage or children until later
P1 "I was not in academia when I started working, there were a number of careers and eventually I joined academia. When I started, it was in government in 1995, and my role was to drive the affirmative action portfolio for government. It was quite demanding because it was the first time I was in a senior positon and had a critical role to play. However, I rose to the challenge and there was a lot of work that had to be done in the initial stages. So it was hard work, it was like working 24hrs"

P1" So I went abroad because I wanted international recognition, then I got my MBA and was recruited by the Department of Trade and Industry in the UK for the African region. My focus was on SADC, because I was not familiar with the rest of Africa at that time, there were a number of projects there and we were very successful. In addition, we generated a lot of revenue on both sides. We dealt again with high profile people, so it was really good exposure and then I decided to come back home because I missed South Africa, I missed culture, I missed the people and I missed the sun."
P1 "You know I wanted to get into Department of Trade and Industry and I was at a very high level. I wanted a high-level position (Directorate) but it was not possible to get into the DTI, and then I could not sit around and do nothing. I am a busy person. Then I decided to do my Doctorate because I wanted to keep busy and be intellectually stimulated and make a contribution …and then, I was offered a position to lecture in the evenings at UP, whilst doing my PhD. So I was at UP for about four years."

P1"… then after I finished my Doctorate, there were no positions available. So I had to look for a job, after a while I got a lecturing position at the University of Cape Town. However, I was grateful to get into the job market with the experience I had. It's very difficult as a Black woman and that's the reality at universities, they keep you down for as long as possible, so I was there for a number of years and I was publishing more than anyone else and lecturing Masters students and supervising Doctorate students"

P2 …" but even whilst I was interrupted, I kept on researching so by the time I achieved my Master's Degree, I got a position at Vista University. "

P2… "So if you want promotion in your career you will have to do a Doctorate, so then I said let me do that"

P2 …" if you are relatively young and you have small children, focus on your academic career. Get your Doctorate, and get a good research reputation."

P2…" I would not have *been able to be a DVC at a relatively large university, if my children were small. I managed because they were older."*

P3 "I actually was a full-time student until I completed my master's degree." *P3 "My first appointment was at Rhodes University and I was there for four years and then I came to Stellenbosch. I have been here since."* *P3 "That was so long ago. I have been here since 1986, 30 years."* *P3" I worked on my PhD while I was still at Rhodes and I got it here at the end of the second year after I was appointed."*
P4 "As I have said, for me it was studies, until the post doc fellowship, so as a student, there were no family commitments, my work was my life. I do not have children and I only got married last year. So yeah, my life was my work. " *P4 "I met my husband two years ago and neither of us have been married before, so we won't have children, it's beyond me now. However, that is fine. It's a different stage."*
P5 "You know I thought I would be a doctor by age 35. Therefore, I got it when I was 44. When I was doing my honors in 1992, I had a mission, and my mission was that when I complete my honors, I would go into Masters. I was so ambitious. From doing my first degree at University of Venda to Wits, its ambition. I was lucky at honors level; I got bursaries from the HSRC – bursaries for women. They encouraged women to be in research. So I did masters at RAU because I was discouraged from doing masters at Wits, having obtained 50%, this was between 1999 and 2001. Then I became a mother in 2002. I got tired, and felt guilty about leaving my son all by himself to go to attend lectures. And not being married, I didn't want to not be a good mother."
P9 "When I joined the University- it was in the year 2000 as a Lecturer. In addition, I had to work on my Masters, but now that I was here, I also thought of starting a family, and because of that, my Masters took longer to complete. I ended up completing in 2005. …the other thing is that I had to go and complete my Internship, so I was meant to do an Internship full time and the University supported me for that". *P9" The fact that I started my family late as a mature person makes it easy for me to get all ready and handle the pressure, even my children are at the age that I can manage their lifestyle, with one being 10 years old and the other 8 years old."*

P10" I am between 35 and 40. Remember I finished my PhD when I was 32 years old and my degree when I was 19. When I started to do my pre-masters, it was 2007. Therefore, I took a big gap. In the UK, people who did PhD were very young, I was the oldest there doing PhD, and in South Africa, I am the youngest. Here we do our PhD at a later stage, but what I observed in the UK is that they research non-stop, whereas here we take breaks." *P10 "I am not married. I do not know why, most people at my level are single. However, it is not because I want to be single, I have just not met someone. And remember I have only been back home for three years … And no children"*

THEME : Work-family balance
SUB- THEME : Putting structures and support systems in place
SUB-THEME : Relying on the support of others
SUB-THEME : Time management
P3 "I try to sort of arrange my day. I am a very early morning person, so I am at the office every morning 6 o'clock. Every morning I am here at the office… I do what I must do by 1 o'clock for three days of the week, and then another two days I have classes in the afternoon and then I have to stay longer. I organize my time in the office in a way that is productive and economical, fit in all my appointments. In addition, of course, post-graduate student appointments are done individually… I have the help of a wonderful secretary, she organizes my diary, and I feel like I can organize my appointments and interactions with staff and students as economically as possible… So three days of the week I can actually finish at 1 o'clock and then I can work at home in the afternoons, and that quiet time is very important to me, and of course, the evenings."
P4 "So when you get your first full time job- because you are so used to having 100% of your day devoted to research, you have to find time to do teaching and research. In my first two years of being a lecturer, I was writing a book with my supervisor, which arose from my PhD. In addition, what we did is - every morning, we spent time (7am to 9am) on the research, before we had any interruptions during the day. Then the rest of the day would be class preparation and lectures. Then, as my career grew, somebody from Poland invited me to co-author with him, and that project was for 10 years. In addition, in that time, I started moving into middle management- HoD and Vice Dean. I then blocked out the entire day for research, and on other days when I had like an hour or so, I would do admin. Because for Maths you really have to have this undisturbed focus."

P4 "I am close to 50. The balance came for me, if you don't have a family you have to make sure you have balance in a different way, so for me it is the dog and I enjoy gardening."
P7 "I put structures in place for my child to be dropped at and fetched from school. I got a dedicated driver to drive my child, when my husband or I is not around. I arranged for after care. " *P7 "This was at the time I was going through a separation with my ex-husband. At this stage, my son had passed matric, and he could drive. I then put in place structures and left for Saudi Arabia".* *P7 "At the time I started my PhD, my son was four years old, and he had already started pre-primary school. "*
P9 "… I also have a domestic helper who supports me. In addition, I have good friends that help me with my kids sometimes".
P10 "Yes, I do have a helper at home, and at the university I work with a team to achieve things. So you need to network"…
P11" I negotiated with my kids early in my career, that these are my goals, here is the cost. I am multi-skilled, I pick up my kids, come to the office, I do my work, they do their homework, we go home. In SA, I think it is still difficult for SA men to handle a hard-working woman like myself, especially within our culture. I let the kids cook, as they are now grown up. My husband complains about this. I think society and the church have played a role in the shaping of these attitudes." *P11" In 2014, I was approached by Unisa to head the Institute of Maths and Science and they offered me Associate Professorship. The first year at Unisa was a bit difficult for me. I still loved my research and the nature of the institution allowed me to do this, but I was used to the American culture, where a manager manages until 4 pm, and then after 4, the researcher job starts. That is why my research career never died when I took on a leadership role, because I still followed the same pattern; being a manager until 4 pm, and after 4 a researcher."*

THEME: Sacrifices and compromises
SUB-THEME : Sacrificing one's social life
SUB-THEME : Compromising on family and yourself
P1 "I got sick because I had a growth in my uterus, I had to rush off for an operation, I was tired. When I came back, you know you can't change the world on your own, but I realized I did what I could".
P2 "I think that what is compromised in the end by juggling all those roles is myself. I think that the time you can spend on yourself simply disappears. There is no time to read a good book, to go to the shops, to go to the Spa, you know, anything like that. There is relatively little time for friends. I remember when I was working and I had a family, as well as my PhD, I would literally say to my friends 'listen, I won't be seeing you for a couple of months, because I am working on my PhD'. My husband and the kids would go on holiday and I would stay home by myself to work on my PhD. Therefore, I really think juggling all these things means that you have to make the best use, the most effective use, of every single minute that you have at your disposal. It is hard, you know, you are working towards a goal. It is okay because you are doing it for yourself. I was saying to myself all the time, 'you know, primarily I'm not trying to get a PhD or trying to move forward in my career for my husband or my children or for anybody else. I am doing it for myself.' In addition, that motivated me. I said to myself 'by working hard, by sacrificing, me as a person, I become stronger. I know I will be a stronger woman from all of this, from all these sacrifices that I make. And I will take every opportunity to learn.' Therefore, if there is an opportunity or somebody gives me an opportunity to go to conferences or to go to some kind of training or a development opportunity, or even simply to be my mentor, I would take that opportunity. I would take every single opportunity to develop myself, to grow in my career. *P2 "I was 20 years old when we got married; we were both very young. At that stage, one would think that you would have a career at a young age, and then later be a stay-at-home mom. In addition, I very soon realized that I cannot do it, I could not. It was terrible when I had to be a stay-at-home mom because I needed the stimulation of a career. He once said to me, "You know, I never signed up for you to be a career woman when we got married." I said well, I was only 20 years old when we got married; I also did not know that this would happen where we are now. Therefore, I think it did cause some friction, it did cause some tension in our marriage and maybe it is because of our personalities or whatever. My husband was a very successful legal person. I think it is because he had a very traditional view of the role of a married woman and it was hard for him to cope with my career trajectory and what that required from him".*

P3 "It just happened that I was very happy in my work and in my studies right from the outset. If I say 'happy' I mean I was very fulfilled and satisfied with the field of linguistics that I had been studying, and I found that interesting and enjoyable, and together with that, I enjoyed working with the lecturers and supervisors and people in the department. So I think the point here is that (and it's a very simple point that many people have made) progression in careers and what you would see as success in careers is that element of absolute enjoyment and fulfillment and satisfaction, that was with me since I can remember".
P4 "In my first two years of being a lecturer I was writing a book with my supervisor, which arose from my PhD. In addition, what we did is - every morning, we spent time (7am to 9am) on research, before we had any interruptions during the day. Then the rest of the day would be class preparation and lectures. Then, as my career grew, somebody from Poland invited me to write another book with him or her and that project was for 10 years. In addition, at that time, I started moving into middle management, first as HOD and then as Vice Dean of teaching and what I found then was that I had to block out the entire day for research, and on other days when I had like an hour or so, I would do admin. Because for Maths you really have to have this undisturbed focus."
P5"I work over the weekends; believe me I work Saturdays and Sundays, I do work-related stuff, but not admin. I do PQM work over the weekends if I know it will be needed on Monday. I have done my research- my chapters, sometimes even using my vacation leave." *P5 "… that is the one thing I feel like I need to manage and balance in terms of time. Therefore, I need to manage that one; i think it's a bit of a weakness. On a positive note, I think I have achieved a lot, because I have the five publications that I did last year, and I have three books, and all the work that needed to be done was done. I have done a lot, but I think I compromised my quality time and maybe family."* *P5"Yes, I compromise family time. I soon realized that I was worried about my son. Like late last year, I realized that I am overdoing things. Therefore, what I used to do is go to church with my son, and then every time after church I take him out, we go to lunch. This is to make up for the times when I wasn't being a good mother."* *P5 "My son didn't do well in mathematics and I feel bad about that. That is why I say I need to check that ".*
P6…"I would sacrifice my personal time, stay in the office during weekends, I had no social life, so the choice was all about doing what I loved and being happy about it."

P7 "During holiday periods, there were no family holidays; I did a lot of research during holidays." *P7 ""My former husband was a businessman. We separated in 2009, got divorced in 2012, and in 2016, I remarried. My divorce didn't impact on my work, because at the time of the divorce I already had my PhD, and was already leading the department, and I focused on my work more."*
P9…"So for me it is all about compromising, because there will be times where I must be totally dedicated to the family. When I have time, I compensate for the times I have been at work and less visible at home."
P10 "I was involved in a relationship in the UK. I wanted to come home to South Africa. He decided he didn't want to come with me".
P11 "For me to be where I am, I made sacrifices. Balancing priorities has always been a problem. I married and divorced, remarried and divorced again and remarried, and even now, I cannot confidently say I have learnt how to balance priorities. I am still waiting to hear someone tell me how this is possible. As someone in a marriage, you work extra hard to be at the level where I am, when you have kids, and we have a culture that makes men expect to be served by a woman. I attribute my success to hard work. I am always ahead of the game."
P11 "I negotiated with my kids early in my career, that these are my goals, here is the cost. I am multi-skilled, I pick up my kids, come to the office, I do my work, they do their homework, we go home. In SA, I think it is still difficult for SA men to handle a hard-working woman like myself, especially within our culture. I let the kids cook, as they are now grown up. My husband complains about this. I think that society and the church have played a role in the shaping of these attitudes." *P11"…This is not my first marriage and I refuse to stay in a marriage where I am not treated with respect, just to have a man. I am also raising girls."*
P12 …" then I found this university in Australia… So I sold my farm, looked for odd jobs working in kitchens and factories. I left my children (15) and (6). When I left, my marriage was already on the rocks, and every time I phoned, the kids were crying on the phone, I realized my kids were falling apart, so I took them. My income was not enough, so I waited until my bonus to pay for my children's stay. I had to do extra work. I came back for my father's burial and my marriage had completely broken down, there was no intimate relationship with my husband … After burying my father, I went back to Australia to finish my studies, and for my kids, whom I had left behind. So my proposal for my PhD was accepted in 2000, and I came back to SA…"

P12 "In 2005, the merger was implemented. Once again, there were workplace challenges; there was a restructuring of faculties and departments. I became a dean without portfolio. I then applied to be a visiting scholar for eight weeks at the Maryland University. I needed a break because even at a personal level, there were challenges, such as another divorce." *P12 "I'm either in the office or at church and all those old men in church are married. The other ones that I know we are just friends, but seriously, I am considering someone I want to settle down with. But I do get satisfaction from my work."*
P13 "I divorced soon and brought up my children as a single mum. After finishing my PhD, I married a guy from Holland, and then we came to Africa." *P13 …" you give children roots and wings, although the roots were tampered with because of political upheavals at the time. I uprooted myself from my kids. The roots were therefore disturbed from the early secure roots that we had. I had to make my children experience Sweden as their original roots. I used the knowledge of primary roots to buttress their secondary roots in Sweden. My first-born is now in his late 30's working in some ministry in Sweden. I have 3 grandkids with the eldest being 19."*